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Summer 2026 style awards

INSIDE TIMES2

My worst holiday job Sathnam Sanghera

Meta 'hid the truth' about impact on children's mental health

Keiran Southern Los Angeles

Meta has been accused of deliberately preying on children and hiding the truth about the effect of social media on their mental health in a landmark court case.

California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey are leading a case brought by a total of 29 states, which are suing the tech giant over its alleged failure to protect children.

The company says it could result in fines of up to $1.4 trillion, close to its total market capitalisation.

Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, was accused in a federal court yesterday of violating child safety laws in the four states. Cases brought by 25 other states are due to be heard later because of differences in each state's consumer protection laws. The cases could force Meta to change how it runs its social media apps in the US and around the world.

The case, being heard in Oakland, California, comes after trials in California and New Mexico in which judges ruled in favour of the families of young people who had suffered harm as a result of their use of social media.

During opening arguments, Megan O'Neill, deputy attorney-general for California, alleged that Meta's strategy was to "hook the users. Hold them for as long as they can. Harvest their data. Hide the truth from the public when making public statements."

O'Neill claimed that Meta "hid the truth" while telling the public that Instagram and Facebook were safe for children: "Facebook and Instagram were designed to keep kids on them and to keep them coming back, even when they knew it was bad for them."

Meta researched how children's brains work and how they would react to online stimuli, the trial was told. The company tracked every interaction that

Continued on page 2

Power shift puts growth in hands of No 10 North

Burnham transfers responsibility from Whitehall

Patrick Maguire
Chief Political Commentator
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Andy Burnham has said that No 10 North will take over responsibility for economic growth from the Treasury as part of a "huge transfer of power" away from Whitehall.

In an interview with The Times, the prime minister raised concerns about the Treasury's traditional dual role in both promoting economic growth and controlling the public finances. He said the department's focus on balancing the books "sometimes clouds that growth mission" and that the significance of No 10 North, which is based in Manchester, would become "more and more apparent as we go forward".

He said that John Healey, the chancellor, fully supported the approach and hit out at critics who have derided No 10 North as a "satellite office".

"It is actually a huge transfer of power," Burnham said. "It's something that the country has never cracked before. I don't wish this to sound, you know, a criticism or negative about the Treasury. There's a job to be done around control of public finances. It's just the dual job of growth and control of public finances sometimes clouds the growth mission. Having No 10 leading on that growth mission means you've got maximum power to unlock the blockages where they exist in the Whitehall system."

Comparing No 10 North to the Department of Economic Affairs, Harold Wilson's doomed attempt to establish a dedicated growth ministry, Burnham said: "I just wish people might just engage with the seriousness of the proposition."

Burnham is expected to put his plans to devolve tax-raising powers at the heart of the budget on October 28. He also revealed that Healey would give a speech on the government's economic agenda next month, with the publication of a "ten-year plan" for sweeping economic and constitutional reform coming after the budget.

Healey's room for manoeuvre in the budget is likely to be limited by constraints on the public finances, particularly given the impact of the war in Iran. The cost of government borrowing reached its highest level in nearly two decades yesterday amid concern about inflation.

Announcing a new partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority to take control of bus services in the region, Burnham signalled that he wanted to go significantly further by taking public control of what he described as life's essentials, including water, energy and housing.

He said the approach would prevent private contractors from holding the public sector "to ransom".

Today the prime minister is expected to announce a further £100 million to help end rough sleeping, with plans to get people "off the streets by Christmas".

Burnham's vision, page 6

Honeymoon tragedy Marie Ebert, 30, and Alexander Cromie, 31, who were killed in a helicopter crash alongside their pilot on a Greek island on Monday Page 5

Darwin has last laugh on reason for ticklishness

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

It seems Charles Darwin can add another accolade to his formidable scientific record: he was right about tickling. More than 150 years after the naturalist proposed that the parts of the body touched least often were the most likely to make us squirm and laugh, researchers have put the idea to the test.

A study, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, tested five theories for why some parts of the body are more susceptible than others.

One idea was that thinner skin is more likely to be ticklish. Another was that ticklish areas have a higher density of touch-sensitive nerves. A third suggested ticklishness evolved to help us to protect vulnerable parts of the body from injury. A fourth linked it to pleasure. The final idea was Darwin's, which he set out in a publication in 1872.

Ziliang Xiong and Konstantina Kilteni, of Radboud University in the Netherlands, recruited 450 people and the participants coloured in outlines of the body to show where they felt most ticklish. The neck, armpits, abdomen and soles of the feet emerged as hotspots.

The researchers used the body maps to test the theories in different ways. To test the vulnerability idea, for instance, they used the size of underlying arteries as a rough measure of how serious an injury to that part of the body might be.

Darwin's idea was the best match. When each idea was tested on its own, the other four showed no significant relationship with the ticklishness map.

However, Darwin may not have provided the full answer. When researchers considered all theories together, they found his premise remained the strongest factor — but the pattern of ticklishness was better explained when differences in nerve density and pleasure were also taken into account.

Exactly why we are ticklish has confounded great thinkers for centuries. The researchers said that the study could still not tell us what evolutionary function tickling serves. "That remains an open question," they said.

News

Today's highlights

7am **Angela Rayner**, the housing secretary
10.30am **Mehdi Hasan**, the US broadcaster on the rise of the Democratic Socialists of America
1.45pm **Daniel Trilling**, author of *Bloody Nasty People: The Rise of Britain's Far Right*
3.35pm **Mary Portas**, right, discusses her new book, *I Shop, Therefore I Am*
4.15pm The Big Issue's founder, **Lord Bird**, on Andy Burnham's campaign to end rough sleeping

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TODAY'S EDITION

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Special investigation: On the line — the loophole

The Story

Children are not just being used to run drugs for county lines gangs. In some cases, they're taking control. Tune in for episode three of a five-part investigative series into county lines drug dealing from The Times and The Sunday Times.

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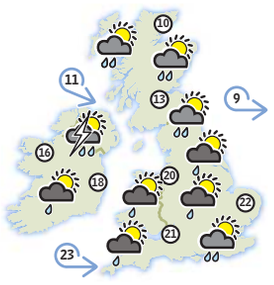

A mixture of sunshine and heavy, blustery showers, perhaps thundery in places. **Full forecast, page 49**

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PM '100% behind Ukraine' as Russia warns UK over drones

Charlie Moloney
Larisa Brown Defence Editor

Andy Burnham has insisted he will keep supporting Ukraine "100 per cent" after Moscow accused the UK of being complicit in "terrorist attacks" by supplying drones for strikes on Russian targets.

The Russian embassy in London warned that the deeper Britain's involvement in supporting Ukraine "the higher the price it will pay". It said the UK was "acting as an accomplice and co-perpetrator" of "bloody crimes ... committed by Ukrainian neo-Nazis".

In response, the prime minister said Britain would continue to "be there in Ukraine's hour of need". He told reporters: "This is the UK doing what it has long said it would do, which is to support Ukraine 100 per cent against this illegal war led by Vladimir Putin.

"We are providing support so that Ukraine can defend itself, and that's been the British position all the way through this conflict by previous prime ministers, it remains the case with me. We are not fairweather friends."

The drones, built by two British companies, have been used inside Russia during a number of successful attacks on its military and industrial sites, such as refineries and warehouses of the online retailer Wildberries, known as Russia's version of Amazon.

Ukraine has said seven out of ten of the largest Wildberries logistics centres have been "disabled" after it consistently targeted the company.

It was revealed by The Sunday Times that British drones had been used in the attacks, said to have caused more than £35 billion in economic damage.

Writing on Telegram, using the Russian spelling for Kyiv, the Russian embassy posted: "Reports that the Kiev regime is using British drones to carry out strikes deep inside Russian territory confirm that London is deliberately opting for an escalation of the Ukraine crisis, while hypocritically professing a desire for peace.

"In doing so, the United Kingdom is acting as an accomplice and co-perpetrator of the bloody crimes and terrorist attacks committed by Ukrainian neo-Nazis, seeking to contain Russia and inflict maximum damage on it by proxy. London's actions will inevitably carry consequences for which it will have to answer. The deeper its involvement in the conflict and the greater its support for Kiev's terrorist machinery, the higher the price it will pay."

The embassy's statement came after Kremlin propagandists on Russian state TV urged President Putin to strike Britain with Poseidon nuclear-armed torpedoes which they claimed could cover the country in a radioactive tsunami. "Give the British three days to learn to breathe underwater, then hit them with Poseidon," the presenter Vladimir Solovyov said.

In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said Britain stood "shoulder to shoulder" with Kyiv and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to provide equipment helping Ukraine to defend itself.

It added: "Russia should be in no doubt about the resolve of this government to stand against Russian aggression, in Ukraine and against the UK and our allies."

Lilian Greenwood, parliamentary under-secretary of state for the Department for Work and Pensions, told Times Radio the government "won't be bullied". She said: "We've stood with Ukraine throughout ... the Russian illegal invasion. We will continue to do so. We won't be bullied in this way."

Public sector pay growth picks up as private slows

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Wage growth in the private sector has fallen to a six-year low, while pay among civil servants, NHS workers and the wider public sector rose sharply.

Salaries in the private sector rose by 2.8 per cent on an annual basis in the three months to June, down from an increase of 2.9 per cent in the previous quarter, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said yesterday. It was the weakest rate of wage growth in the private sector since the three months to October 2020, during the pandemic.

In contrast, pay in the public sector rose 6.1 per cent, up from a rise of 5.5 per cent in the previous three months. The sudden rise was driven by NHS staff receiving their pay award this year compared with 2025, the ONS said.

The rate of unemployment across the UK economy held steady at 4.9 per cent. Vacancies fell by 4,000 over the past quarter to 707,000 in the three months to June, down from a peak of nearly 1.3 million in 2022 and the lowest level outside the pandemic since 2014.

Single-month estimates for June alone, which the ONS said should be treated with caution, showed that the rate of unemployment climbed to 5.4 per cent from 4.6 per cent in May. The accuracy of the ONS's labour market data has weakened sharply over the past few years owing to a decline in response to the survey that is used to generate it.

Joblessness among people aged 18 to 24 edged down to 14.6 per cent from 14.8 per cent, although it was still close to an 11-year high. The economic inactivity rate, the share of people not in work or looking for a job, was unchanged at 20.9 per cent.

Liz McKeown, director of economic statistics at the ONS, said: "Regular wage growth has remained broadly stable in recent months. Private sector pay growth has continued to ease, while public sector pay growth remains elevated due to the timing of the latest NHS pay awards. Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates have remained steady, while the number of employees on payroll fell slightly."

Higher public sector wages threaten the nation's finances, leading article, page 22

'£500k' for Starmer's top mandarin

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Sir Chris Wormald received a record payout believed to be about £500,000 after Sir Keir Starmer forced him out as Britain's most senior civil servant.

His package was understood to have included enhanced pension payments reflecting his sudden departure after only 14 months as cabinet secretary.

The payout had to be personally approved by Starmer after Cat Little, the Cabinet Office permanent secretary, raised concerns over its value for money.

The settlement was roughly twice the £260,000 initially expected and exceeded the £457,000 paid to Sir Tom Scholar after he was sacked as permanent secretary to the Treasury by Liz Truss, the Financial Times reported.

Wormald was removed in February during a reset of Starmer's No 10 as the prime minister at the time sought to regain control of his government.

The Cabinet Office said: "We don't comment on individual HR matters."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Social media on trial

young people had on its apps, O'Neill claimed.

The jury was shown an internal email sent to Adam Mosseri, head of Instagram, which said the company's success was measured in "teen time spent".

Employees of the tech giant viewed Instagram as a "drug" and themselves as "pushers", O'Neill said. "Meta found the younger a kid is when they start using the app, the better. The more likely they are to remain a user, the more likely they are to make Meta money in the long run."

Critics of these civil actions argue that Meta is being targeted because of its market value and used as a scapegoat for a complex societal problem. The mental health crisis among children has many causes, including family life, the pandemic and wider reliance on smartphones, they say.

Bereaved parents of children who took their own lives after developing mental health problems, allegedly due to social media, have supported the cases against Meta.

O'Neill said parents could not protect their children if they did not know the truth about the platforms they were using. "We will ask the jury to hold Meta accountable at the end of trial, and to make sure the company will do its share," she said.

In a statement before the trial, Meta said it offered extensive measures to protect young users of its apps. "We are proud of our record in protecting teens on our platforms and the amount of effort that we've put into developing protections over the years," it said.

In his opening statement, Meta's lawyer, Paul Schmidt, accepted there was "no dispute" that some users were negatively affected by social media. However, he said research did not show a clear link between social media use by adolescents and a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

Countries including the UK and Australia have or plan to implement social media bans for under-16s.

Meta has said that if it is found liable in the Oakland trial, the financial penalties could be as high as $1.4 trillion. However, attorneys-general for the states have not specified penalties and at a hearing last week said the amount could be about $200 billion.

California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey also want Meta to eliminate the so-called infinite scroll function and add age restrictions. Mark Zuckerberg, Meta's chief executive, and Mosseri are expected to testify. The trial is scheduled to last six weeks.

Queen's struggle with cancer secret

Camilla reveals it was hard to stay silent about Charles's diagnosis on a visit to a support centre, **Seren Hughes** writes

JANE BARLOW/PA

The King inspects the Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland yesterday. Camilla with Dame Laura Lee and, far left, on her Maggie's visit

The Queen has spoken about how she was "longing" to share news of the King's cancer diagnosis while visiting a specialist centre, days before it was made public.

The King's diagnosis was announced on February 5, 2024. Just a week before, Camilla opened a Maggie's cancer support centre in London.

The Queen told of how "difficult" it was not to share her husband's cancer diagnosis with the people she met there and how much more "deeply" connected she felt to the cancer sufferers and their families.

In a film to mark the 30th anniversary of Maggie's, Camilla, who has been president of the cancer charity since 2008, recalled: "Nobody could say anything at the time. That was quite difficult. I almost said something but, you know, I felt that it wasn't the time to say. [I] looked at everybody who was suffering and all the relations and I think it made me realise even more how important these places were."

Speaking to the charity's chief executive, Dame Laura Lee, the Queen added: "I was just longing to let it out but obviously I couldn't."

The type of cancer the King was diagnosed with has not been disclosed, but it has been confirmed that it is not prostate cancer.

Buckingham Palace said in December that he had responded exceptionally well to treatment and was moving into what it called a precautionary phase. His treatment has been reduced but he has not been described as being in remission.

Camilla spoke about meeting people while visiting the centre at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, north London, and how she was "almost questioning them" but "didn't want to pry too deeply". She said: "Normally when I went in I was just talking to them but I felt it was much more deep.

"Suddenly your husband is diagnosed and you think goodness, you've been talking to all these people and I'm the one with some relation who's got to help to look after my poor husband and try to understand it all."

Lee spoke of how many people had come into their centres "because of the King being so open about his diagnosis and having a productive life". Camilla said: "Nothing stopped him. He just said, 'This is my way I'm going to cope with it.'"

Lee added: "The King's openness about his diagnosis has undoubtedly helped others to be more open themselves and to now hear the Queen's completely understandable and natural response as a wife, shines a light on why it is so important that family and friends also get the support they need."

The film features people living with cancer who have been supported by Maggie's. Camilla has visited 18 out of its 27 centres. Her most recent visit was to one in Cheltenham in January to mark the opening of an extension. Meanwhile, the King was greeted as he arrived for his summer holiday at Balmoral yesterday by Highland men-at-arms, having reinstated the group after 90 years. The Balmoral Highlanders were disbanded in 1936, the year his great-grandfather, George V, died. The first two members of the revived group, both employees of the 50,000-acre Aberdeenshire estate, stood at the castle's front gate carrying ceremonial Lochaber axes. Their uniform draws on the kilts worn on the estate in the late 1800s, with kilt and plaid in Balmoral Glen Gelder tartan, designed by the Scottish Tartans Authority at the King's request.

The King, colonel-in-chief of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, inspected a guard of honour from the Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, and met its mascot, a Shetland pony named Corporal Cruachan IV, as a small crowd watched through the gates.

Diana's brother promises revelations in book about her life

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Earl Spencer has written a book about his sister Princess Diana that publishers promise contains "many revelations" about her life.

Swan Song: Diana My Sister, is to be released on September 22, shortly after the anniversary of her death in Paris aged 36 on August 31, 1997.

It will mark the first time that Spencer, 62, has spoken at length about his sister, according to its publisher, Penguin Michael Joseph, a division of Penguin Random House UK.

Spencer said that he had been inspired to write the book after fielding inquiries to speak three decades after her death. "With the 30th anniversary of Diana's tragic death on the skyline [next year], I've been inundated yet again with requests for interviews about my sister," he said. "This has convinced me to write down my own thoughts and memories, once and for all, rather than having the discomfort of again reading the opinions of others, many of which are based on untruths that have become accepted over time."

Spencer, who is Diana's youngest sibling, said that *Swan Song*'s aim was "to tell the truth about Diana from her brother's perspective, just as I attempted to do when speaking at her funeral". He added: "As with my eulogy, I want to speak on Diana's behalf and do so in an openly positive way."

During the funeral Spencer delivered a passionate speech in which he referred to his sister's "blood family" and promised to look after her sons, Prince William and Prince Harry. "I pledge that we, your blood family, will do all we can to continue the imaginative way in which you were steering these two exceptional young men so that their souls are not simply immersed by duty and tradition but can sing openly as you planned," he said at the time.

Diana was buried on an island on his estate, Althorp, in Northamptonshire.

Spencer wants *Swan Song* to be read by a broad audience. "I hope this book will be of interest to the many who still cherish the memory of Diana when she was alive, and I would be delighted if those too young to remember her in her heyday feel — after reading this — that they 'get' who she really was," he said. "A one-off dynamic character, full of love, charisma and self-doubt, who gave life a hell of a go, and left the world a better place, despite exiting the stage while still so young."

Daniel Bunyard, publishing director at Penguin Random House UK said that it was a book of "historic" importance written from a "vantage point of such intimacy".

He said: "Charles Spencer is both a loving brother and an acclaimed memoirist as well as a celebrated historian, and all these facets are brought together in *Swan Song*. While these pages contain many revelations that will draw considerable attention, readers will find, for the first time, but also for all time, a fitting tribute to the beloved woman who was Princess Diana."

The book will be "a fitting tribute", her brother says

Diana died in a car crash the year after her divorce from the Prince of Wales, now the King, was finalised. The accident, in which Dodi Fayed, her partner, and Henri Paul, the chauffeur, also died led to public mourning and her funeral was watched by more than two billion people.

VICKI COUCHMAN FOR THE TIMES

Heading out A sculpture of the late poet Benjamin Zephaniah by George Triggs has gone on public display for the first time at TM Gallery, central London

Majority of benefit claimants are not required to seek work

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Benefits claimants who are not expected to look for work now outnumber jobseekers by almost three to one.

More than half of the record 8.4 million people claiming universal credit were in the no work-related requirements category in May, compared with about 1.6 million required to search for work. The proportion with no requirement to work has risen from 46 per cent last summer to 51 per cent, according to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) figures.

The rise has been driven in large part by people moving from older benefits to universal credit. In February, 1.7 million claimants had joined universal credit through the managed migration programme, of whom 1.2 million, seven in ten, were in the group not required to work.

The latest figures, for May, showed the overall universal credit caseload had risen by 700,000 in a year, from 7.7 million in May last year to 8.4 million.

Meanwhile, 3.1 million claimants — 37.7 per cent — were in employment in April, down from 3.2 million and 41.9 per cent a year earlier.

Claimants categorised as not required to seek work include people whose health or caring responsibilities prevents them, some full-time students, people over state pension age, parents of children aged under one and those assessed as having no prospect of work.

Those who receive the benefit for health reasons can be reassessed. Ministers are increasing reassessments for other claimants while introducing a scheme that stops those who may try to work from having their benefits automatically reviewed, to encourage them back into the workplace.

Polling for Alan Milburn's government-commissioned review into youth inactivity found that 27 per cent of Britons believed success depended mainly on hard work, while 50 per cent thought young people had fewer opportunities than in previous generations. A further 22 per cent said success depended on who someone knew or their family background, while 5 per cent believed talent was the main factor. Half said that young people had fewer opportunities now. Among those aged 16 to 24 the figure was 56 per cent, compared with 47 per cent among those 55 to 75.

Milburn's interim report in May found more than one million 16 to 24-year-olds were not in education, employment or training.

The former Labour health secretary, who was commissioned by the government last year to investigate the rise in young people outside work and education, said: "More and more people believe hard work is not rewarded. That undermines the promise that has been at the heart of our country's social contract — that if you put in effort, you will be able to get ahead, and that each generation should do better than the last. That promise is being broken."

The government said it was spending £2.5 billion on youth employment reforms intended to support almost one million young people and create up to 500,000 opportunities to earn or learn.

It also announced a £2,000 incentive for small businesses taking on a 16 to 24-year-old apprentice and planned to extend its jobs guarantee from the autumn to eligible 18 to 24-year-olds who had been on universal credit and looking for work for 18 months.

A DWP spokesman said: "Nearly 80 per cent of the increase in universal credit cases since July 2024 is driven by people moving from legacy benefits — a transition started by the previous government."

Flight crew face greatest cancer risk from radiation

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Pilots and flight attendants have a greater risk of radiation-related cancer deaths than other professions, a study from Harvard has found.

Researchers examined more than 500 occupations in the United States, finding that flight attendants and pilots had the highest and second-highest proportion of radiation-related cancer deaths, respectively.

The study, published in Jama Internal Medicine, examined data from the National Vital Statistics System to look at the death certificates of 13 million people across 503 occupations, including 14,190 pilots and 7,170 flight attendants between 2020 and 2024.

The researchers found that flight crew had significantly higher rates of radiation-related cancers such as breast cancer, central nervous system cancer, prostate cancers and melanoma, but not other radiation-related cancers such as lymphoma and leukaemia. Pilots were found to have a higher rate of leukaemia deaths. About 6.9 per cent of deaths among flight attendants and 6.7 per cent among pilots were from radiation-related cancers.

The rates were higher than those of other radiation-exposed professions, such as nuclear technologists, as well as those not exposed to radiation, including aircraft mechanics and assemblers. Nuclear technologists are exposed to a high level of radiation, but are screened for radiation-related cancers.

Rates of non-radiation-related cancer deaths among aircrew members were similar to the general population. The Harvard Medical School team highlighted that flight crews accrued an estimated 3–6 millisieverts of radiation each year, which they compared with "the 0.4 millisieverts received by an air traveller taking ten cross-country round-trip flights per year".

About 530,000 people are employed in airlines, airports and aerospace in Britain, according to Airlines UK.

Quintagram® No 2650

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Of the smallest amount (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Legally positioned in football (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Centrally directed or disposed (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Flow control devices in a lock (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Nonagenarian's decade (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	C	D	D	E	E	E
E	E	I	I	I	I	I	L
L	N	N	N	N	O	R	S
S	S	S	S	T	T	U	W

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Renewables boss guilty

A renewables boss later convicted of possessing indecent images of children asked a computer shop to wipe his hard drives, unaware the assistant was a special constable. Alexander Hensher, 48, pleaded guilty at Weymouth magistrates' court. He received a 12-month community order, 100 hours of unpaid work and a sexual harm prevention order.

Iron Age 'hot tub'

A stone-lined hollow found in Sutherland containing a woman's skeleton may have been a hot tub. Lachlan McKeggie, of Highland Archaeology Services, said: "When site staff first saw the pit and how well the stone lining was built they thought it might be modern, but the finds inside, and this style of building, all point to an Iron Age date."

West London stabbing

A man, 48, has been arrested on suspicion of murder after two women were stabbed in west London. Police were called yesterday morning to Askew Road in Shepherd's Bush and found two women, 52 and 32, wounded. The older woman was pronounced dead. Anyone with information should contact police quoting reference 1673/18AUG.

All in for 'WC' hankies

A set of Winston Churchill's personalised handkerchiefs fetched £2,580 and one of his cigars — plus a half-smoked stub — went for £1,190 at an auction by Sworders in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. They were sold by the grandson of Charles Wooton, a gardener who worked at Churchill's Chartwell country home in Kent for decades.

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Greek honeymoon's tragic end

Charlie Parker, Anthee Carassava, Lara Bowman, Herbie Russell

GIUSEPPE/REUTERS

Marie Ebert and Alexander Cromie died on holiday in Sifnos. Video of the aircraft's final moments could point to a defect in the tail rotor system, a former pilot said

A British couple on their honeymoon have died after their private helicopter crashed into a field and burst into flames just short of a heliport on a Greek island.

Alexander Cromie, 31, and his wife, Marie Ebert, 30, were killed alongside their Greek pilot, Giorgos Raikos, 55, when the aircraft went down in the Tholos area on the Aegean island of Sifnos.

Cromie was a vice-president for private wealth solutions at Blackstone, where he had worked for four years.

A spokesman for the company told The Times: "We are shocked by the tragic passing of three people including our colleague Alex Cromie and his wife Marie Ebert, who were celebrating their honeymoon.

"Alex was beloved by everyone who knew and worked with him at Blackstone, and our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones."

Ebert was a senior specialist in market reputation at Bain & Company, a global management consulting firm. A spokesman for the company called her a "much-loved" and "deeply respected" colleague. "Our thoughts are with Marie's family, with her husband Alex's family, and with the friends and colleagues who are grieving them both," he said, as well as extending his sympathies to Raikos's family.

When the Bell 206 aircraft crashed, it ignited a fireball that engulfed the wreckage and scattered debris. The crash "came minutes before the scheduled 18.15 landing", a senior police official in Athens told The Times. "The helicopter was scheduled to leave 25 minutes later."

Firefighters and a doctor rushed to the scene within minutes. Additional support was dispatched from the neighbouring island of Syros to assist with the recovery operation.

Greek aviation safety officials have opened an inquiry. They are examining flight records, weather conditions and potential mechanical failure to determine the cause of the crash.

A leading police official involved in the investigation said yesterday evening that experts were still combing through the debris. They were also working to determine whether the crash was caused by a sudden medical emergency of the pilot. "We will have a clearer picture once the coroner examines the body of the pilot," the official said, adding that nothing had been ruled out.

All three bodies will be transferred to the country's main state morgue in Piraeus, the main port for Athens.

Cromie worked as a broker at NatWest and a graduate analyst at RBS before joining Blackstone, according to his LinkedIn profile.

He graduated from the University of Sheffield with a 2:1 in economics in 2016. Among his university activities he listed cricket, American football, the ski team and roles as sports officer and corporate director for the investment society.

Ebert was educated at the École française de Lausanne-Valmont, an international school in Switzerland, between 2008 and 2014. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in management and marketing from the University of Exeter in 2018. She was fluent in English and French and could also speak German and Spanish, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Before working at Bain & Company in July last year, Ebert worked as a marketing manager for Coller Capital, an investment firm, and as an assistant manager at Federated Hermes, a global asset manager.

The Foreign Office said that it was in contact with the authorities in Greece and was ready to provide assistance to the victims' families.

The fire service said that the crash triggered an alarm heard across the island in the Cyclades, which is popular with tourists over the summer months. Sifnos, which has a population of about 2,600 people, is known for its sandy beaches and the striking white Chrysopigi Monastery.

Manolis Foundoulakis, the deputy mayor of the island, said residents who saw the helicopter crash within metres of their homes spoke of a "bizarre engine noise coming from the aircraft"

as it was about to land. Aviation experts and police investigators reviewing forensic evidence of the crash said that nothing in the flight's final approach suggested trouble was imminent.

Raikos, who is believed to be a married father of three, was described as a highly experienced pilot with thousands of flying hours.

"The pilot did not radio in any distress call," Pantelis Fragoulis, a former Army Aviation Corps pilot, said. He told a national broadcaster that video footage capturing the helicopter's final seconds — a sudden manoeuvre — "strongly pointing to a fatal defect in the tail rotor system".

He added: "Such a devastating fault can overwhelm even the steadiest of hands."

A sudden mid-air health crisis, however, has not been ruled out. Forthcoming forensic and toxicological examinations are expected to clarify whether a medical emergency incapacitated the pilot at the controls.

At the start of this month a British pilot, Andrew Hutchinson, 48, survived when two helicopters, which were both fighting the massive wildfires to the west of Athens, collided. Two people died on the first helicopter but Hutchinson survived by landing his vehicle with severely damaged rotors.

Gervais: I may finally get married to avoid paying tax

Mark Ludlow

Ricky Gervais once said he didn't see the point of getting married because "there is no God". Sixteen years later, he has found a reason: paying less tax.

The comedian and creator of *The Office*, 65, who is worth an estimated £141 million, said he was considering marrying Jane Fallon, his partner of 44 years, to avoid an inheritance tax bill from the government after he dies.

"It [tax] is the reason. And that will be the reason I marry. We haven't done it yet. But if it wasn't for [tax], why?" he told Saga Magazine. "It's mad. How more married can you be? We share all our money, we've been living together for 40 years. Some marriages don't last a year." Gervais, who owns homes with Fallon in London, Buckinghamshire and New York, conceded he may need to make things official soon because of his age. "It's horrible, isn't it? I've got to get around to marrying before I die," he said.

In the UK, unlike married couples and civil partners, unmarried couples do not automatically benefit from the spouse exemption, which allows an estate to be passed on to a surviving husband, wife or civil partner free of inheritance tax. Without marriage, tax is generally charged at 40 per cent of the portion of an estate above the tax-free threshold of £325,000.

Gervais and Fallon met while studying at University College London in 1982 and moved in together two years later. The couple chose not to marry or have any children.

Fallon said as a child she never dreamt of having a big wedding or a wedding dress. "I would think about getting a dog or something. It was always about work and my life. I would think about the flat that I would live in and stuff like that. But I was never into that kind of romance stuff," she told the *Second Act* podcast with Ateh Jewel in January this year.

Fallon had breast cancer diagnosed in February after a routine mammogram before Christmas. In April she gave a positive update, saying surgeons had successfully removed the tumour.

Gervais became a global star after the award-winning BBC series *The Office* which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. He followed up the success of the mockumentary series, which focused on the mundane working life at a printing company in Slough, with the comedies *Extras*, *Derek* and *After Life*, as well as starring in some Hollywood films including *The Invention of Lying*, *Ghost Town* and *Night at the Museum*.

Ricky Gervais, who has a new series, and his long-term partner Jane Fallon

He has also continued to build his fortune as a stand-up comedian, including earning a record-breaking £1.41 million for a single performance at the Hollywood Bowl during his *Armageddon* tour in 2023.

Gervais, who has just released an animated series for adults on Netflix called *Alley Cats*, told The Sunday Times in 2010 that he and Fallon were married for all intents and purposes, adding that their "fake marriage has lasted longer than a real one".

Burnham's vision pulls into focus at the bus station

The PM's roadshow rolls into another area he argues has suffered from private ownership, **Patrick Maguire** writes

The door swung shut and, after two hours of gladhanding, selfies and sincerity, the prime minister was gone. All that was left for the pensioners and teenagers to gawp at — before they carried on and bought their singles and day returns to Codsall, Bilston and Cannock via Cheslyn Hay — was the little brass plaque marking Andy Burnham's final destination. It read: "Bus station facilities."

Westminster's cognoscenti would have found the symbolism delicious. They want to believe that Burnham has not yet outgrown the mayoral office that made him. And here he was, yesterday morning in Wolverhampton, once again banging on about buses as the Russians threatened retribution against Britain.

The prime minister's summer roadshow had rocked up in the Black Country. The headline attractions: free bus travel for disabled people at all hours of the day, and the West Midlands network under public control.

Not long ago, no less an authority on effective statecraft than Theresa May warned Burnham against the misapprehension that he could run the country like he was still in Greater Manchester. She would not have made much of her successor-but-four musing on what, exactly, the people of the West Midlands might call their own version of Manchester's Bee Network.

"The Bull Network," said one local, speaking to the prime minister through a sign language app at a crowded table. Burnham smiled peaceably, then made a suggestion of his own. "Here it would be the Wolves Network, wouldn't it?" Pure Burnham, May might have said: all buses and branding and not much else. But for the prime minister, this was just a first tentative step back up from the foothills of public control — and towards the commanding heights he is promising to reclaim for his Labour government.

Burnham, tieless and familiar, pulled up a chair at the next table. "I think this country gave away control over too much," he told another set of Wulfrunians. "Buses, trains, water."

A few seconds later, the painful but obligatory afterthought: "It is hard to find the money." He was perching beside the confluence of ambition and reality. But in the weeks and months to come, he will wade into those torrid waters regardless.

In this next phase of Burnham's month-old premiership, he wants to prove that more public control and ownership of the "essentials" of economic life are not an impossibility or death wish for a nation in dire fiscal straits, but its chance of escape. Even here, in the bus station, reminders of the scale and complexity of his designs on a new business model for Britain were everywhere: in the eye-popping liveries of the private buses rolling up behind him, the outsourcer's logo printed on the hi-vis vest of the ageing cleaner who told Burnham he was wrong about video assistant referees.

Much bigger changes lie ahead for Britain's economic model — and its constitution. Burnham feels his "critique" of the status quo is now clear. It bears repeating. He thinks the way the government does business is at once profoundly undemocratic and, despite what the bond vigilantes might think of him, fiscally incontinent. He came to this view not through ideology but experience: "pragmatism", he says. Public control will mean tighter, more enduring control of the public spending he is already under pressure to cut.

Here, hiding in plain sight, is the theory of growth he is often accused of lacking. "It comes back to this point about control, and the ability to get growth going — because you've got to have the control where you need it to unlock issues, to allow business to get quicker connections," Burnham said.

"And we're not set up for growth, in the way you have to have a grip over those things to be set up for growth. So people are misreading this if they see this as highly ideological.

"I would say it's highly pragmatic, because if you don't have the ability to shape those fundamental enabling services, you don't control the destiny of the place you're leading. You don't have a handle on the levers of growth."

That's the diagnosis. What's the prescription? "What's not clear yet," Burnham admitted, "is what you do about it, with the exception of buses."

He knows people think he sounds like a scratched record, but insisted: "That learning is actually really valuable when you then start to apply it to housing, water, energy." We will be waiting a little while for the answer — and he was careful, too, to draw a distinction between public control and public ownership.

What he does know is where the answer will come from."The No 10 North innovation is more significant than people realise," he said. "And that will become more and more apparent as we go forward."

As ever, Burnham believes he is fatally misunderstood. His new desk in Heron House is not a mere "satellite office". Unprompted, he brought up Harold Wilson's doomed attempt to check the power of the Treasury with the Department of Economic Affairs. Six decades on, Burnham — who has taken to dressing, like a member of Wilson's cabinet, in shirtsleeves and braces — wants to complete that unfinished business. He has no beef with the Treasury, he stressed. He is "completely aligned" in a "really tight partnership" with John Healey, the chancellor. "There's a job to be done around control of public finances."

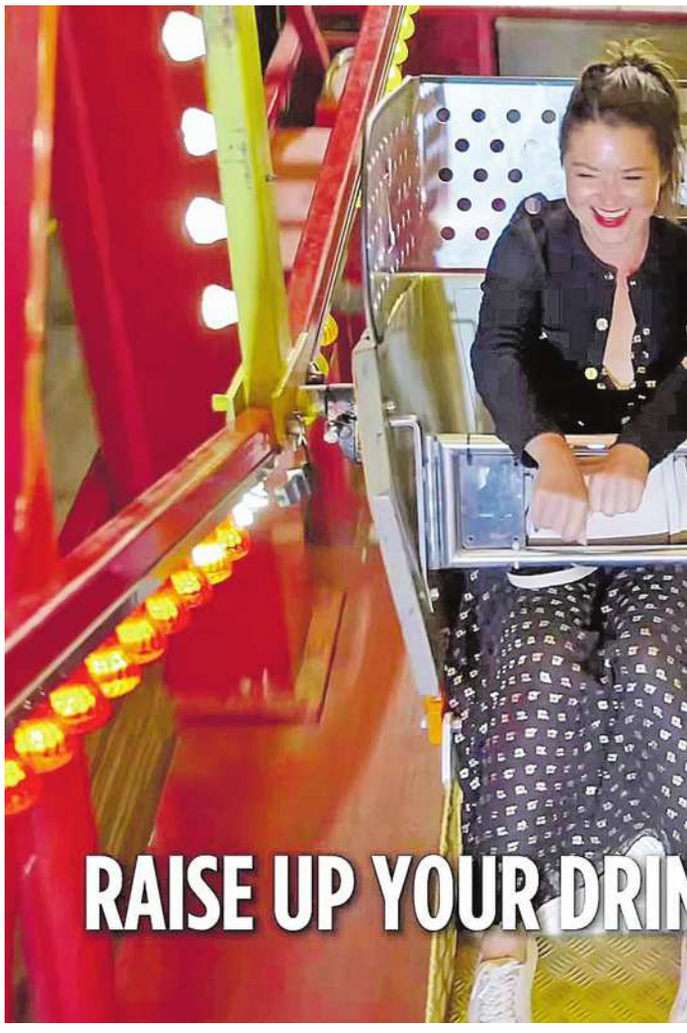
But, just as it was in the 19th century — albeit to rather different ends — growth now belongs to Manchester. "The dual job of growth and control of public finances sometimes clouds the growth mission," Burnham said of Whitehall's old order. "Having No 10 leading on that growth mission means you've got maximum power to unlock the blockages where they exist in the Whitehall system." There is a new "tilt" in Britain's constitution — first towards Burnham, and then back out to the country. "No 10 North has been constructed with that thought."

It is a grand design for a "huge transfer of power". The hard slog of redistributing it will expose the prime minister to the opprobrium to which, despite the defeat of his critics in Makerfield, he remains sensitive. Is Andy Burnham really ready to be unpopular? That's the hardy perennial of Westminster's amateur psychoanalysts. Burnham cannot stand it. How could he have survived as mayor for a decade if he couldn't cope? But then he once again makes his break from the certainties of Westminster. He decried the "fetish" for toughness that made "masochists" of his predecessors.

"Isn't the job to be popular — by making people's lives better? Isn't that what you *should* be doing? If you're getting up every day — which I do every day — and saying: what could I do today to make people's lives better? If you're waking up at that moment, maybe you might be more popular than somebody who thinks: oh, how can I posture as tough today to the whole country?"

A few hours earlier, he turned from his audience towards the mayor of the West Midlands. "You've only got one person to blame now, and he's sitting over there." As his new economic settlement takes shape, Burnham could have been talking about himself.

Andy Burnham meets staff at Wolverhampton bus station, where he said the country was not set up for growth



Reform UK has released a video of "Farage Fest", a "watch party" for last week's by-election in Clacton, Essex — accompanied by a relentlessly upbeat pop song

PM received nearly £350k in donations

Geraldine Scott

Andy Burnham received campaign funding and support worth nearly £350,000 in the four months before he became prime minister.

He also declared £13,630 of hospitality, including four tickets and accommodation at Glastonbury and two tickets to Ladies Day at Aintree in the year before he became an MP.

A Labour Party spokesman said: "It's right that political campaigns are funded by the generous support of party donors, rather than via the public purse."

The donations, disclosed in Burnham's first register of financial interests since becoming MP for Makerfield, funded his mayoral, by-election and Labour leadership campaigns.

No 10 brushes

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Andy Burnham said "nothing of consequence" was shared when he was duped into exchanging messages with someone impersonating President Trump's chief of staff.

The prime minister denied being embarrassed, and stressed that he quickly reported the issue once he realised the person he was communicating with was not Susie Wiles.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, Burnham confirmed a report by the Politico website that he had personally spoke via message with a person purporting to be Wiles.

Asked if he was embarrassed about being taken in by the imitator, he told reporters: "No, I'm not, because there was a minimal exchange, nothing of consequence.

"And actually, quickly I realised that this needed to be reported, and I did so. So I handled it in the right way. All poli-

Buckle up for wild ride of Clacton's Farage Fest

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

Last Thursday, arguably for obvious reasons, Nigel Farage was having so much fun at a Nigel Farage-themed festival in a field in Clacton that he pretended he'd been told by Essex police that it wouldn't be safe for him to leave.

That, back then, was the reason given for his non-attendance at his own by-election victory. None of the three official candidates from the Monster Raving Loony Party had concluded the event would be unsafe to attend, but that doesn't prove anything. In a real Catch-22 moment for our modern political times, of course they'd think it's safe because they're all mad. And as far as his main rival was concerned, well, Farage doesn't have the luxury of a giant protective bin on his head, does he?

Still, three days later, in the wake of Essex police making clear that no such advice was given, Reform concluded that further explanation was necessary, but they got it slightly wrong. Instead of explaining why they pretended they'd been told the by-election wasn't safe, they explained what is, in fairness, the far greater mystery. Which is how on earth can a Nigel Farage festival be fun? And they explained it in the unlikely medium of an 86-second AI slop pop video, released on social media at 10.28pm, thus rendering it indistinguishable from an especially troubling cheese dream.

Ordinarily, you'd ask which had less money spent on it, the music or the lyrics, but on this occasion we don't need to, as we know the answer to both is zero. It doesn't cost a thing to go to an AI generation website and type in something like: "Can you make up an upbeat song about some men standing in a field watching GB News? I'm thinking Katy Perry in the Just Eat advert era. Go big on desperation but very small indeed on wit."

For those of us unable to attend "Farage Fest", which really was a by-election count "watch party" event, at least now we have a sense of what it was like to be there. There was a ferris wheel, which appears to have been real, though AI can't be ruled out. As for entertainment? The inhouse AI lyricist describes it thus: "Tents in the field and the music breaking through/ Watching it live on GB News." Even the relentlessly upbeat melody and occasional refrains of "Far. Age. Fest" are unable to conceal the fact that last Thursday in Clacton, there really does appear to have been an event described as a "festival" at which the entertainment began and ended with a big screen showing GB News.

William Hague wrote in The Times about serious concerns that AI will soon slip free of the control of its human overlords with terrible consequences. So we ask with some sincerity: Could this be how the world ends? Specifically, with an AI pop song about a festival meta-event in Clacton, at which the attendees watch themselves watching themselves on GB News, the whole thing accidentally forming its own self-contained black hole, a bit like when you accidentally stick your head between the double mirrors on the inside of a hotel wardrobe.

The point of gathering at Farage Fest was to be there, in the company of like-minded legends, to watch Farage claim victory in the election. So it must have come as a shock to them when, come the big moment, the big man wasn't *there* because he was *still here*. Watch the video too many times, which is to say once, and it starts to feel a bit like Jarvis Cocker doing the spoken word bridge section in *Sorted for E's & Wizz*.

"And this hollow feeling grows and grows and grows/ And you want to call your mother/ And say, 'Mother, I can't attend the count in person/ Because I seem to have left an important part of my brain somewhere/ Somewhere on a ferris wheel in Clacton, all right."

Of course, taking the mickey out of political videos is standard fare in this game but in this case, I have to accept that the joke's on me. How much scrutiny is a bit of AI garbage meant to bear? It feels more than a little demeaning even to transcribe its final soaring lyric: "Raise up your boards and the whole field yells, 'I'm with Nigel!'" Which is no doubt what happened, before the more savvy among them turned to one another and whispered: "But I've got no idea what he's still doing here."

off messages with impostor

ticians are receiving these pressures and these challenges, but I did everything right. There was a minimal exchange of information of zero consequence, and it was quickly reported."

Burnham added that "the correct action has been taken here and in the US", but declined to give further details. No 10 has declined to answer questions about what Burnham sent to the person impersonating Wiles and whether the identity of the culprit is known.

In the past when senior politicians have been targeted, it has sometimes been the result of a video-making prankster.

However, James MacClearly, the Liberal Democrats' defence spokesman, said a "malign actor" could have easily been behind the contact.

In a letter to the chair of parliament's intelligence and security committee, he called for the cross-party group to launch an investigation into the "egregious security breach".

MacCleary wrote: "This is an unacceptable breach. The security of the prime minister's communications ought to be an absolute priority — and yet it appears, in this case, that routine measures to guard against these kinds of breaches were not followed."

Last year, The Wall Street Journal reported that the FBI had launched an investigation into efforts to access Wiles's phone, after an unknown person contacted prominent Republicans and business chiefs while pretending to be her.

Susie Wiles, President Trump's chief of staff

President Trump appeared not to be aware of the incident involving Burnham and told reporters on Monday: "I'm sure that he had a miscommunication."

Greens: Police reporters' consciences

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Green Party members have proposed giving a statutory press regulator the power to police the consciences of journalists under sweeping media controls.

Reporters would be given a "conscience clause" allowing them to refuse assignments if the regulator determined they were unethical. The watchdog would set the applicable standards.

Media companies could also be forced to sell assets under statutory thresholds for concentrated ownership with the option of "forced divestment".

Foreign individuals and companies would be prohibited from owning shares in national newspapers, national broadcasters and large regional media groups. Media businesses would have to be ultimately owned exclusively by people domiciled in Britain.

A statutory right of reply would entitle any person or community subjected to an "allegedly defamatory, misleading, racially motivated, or otherwise discriminatory publication" to have a response published or broadcast with equal prominence. The motion did not explain how it would decide whether a publication was misleading, racially motivated or discriminatory.

The proposals could become official Green Party policy if adopted at its autumn conference. The motion, first reported by The Spectator, was published two days after the death of Jason Arday. A version seen by The Times yesterday evening listed 108 supporters.

It called for two reporting routes within the regulator to "map and address racism" and "map and address ableism" in media output.

Every main national newspaper would have to join a "genuinely independent, recognised press regulator with statutory enforcement powers". Most papers voluntarily belong to the Independent Press Standards Organisation, enforcing the Editors' Code of Practice. Ofcom regulates broadcasters.

Zack Polanski, the Greens' leader, wrote on X last night: "Freedom of the press should never have been freedom to own and dominate the press. (And push constant misinformation and lies.) Media regulation. Now."

The proposal was submitted by Tariq Khawaja, a member of Greens for Palestine, a network of Green Party members. It would have to be selected for debate and approved by members at the party's autumn conference.

Greens for Palestine called yesterday for The Times to be held "accountable" after this newspaper revealed party activists had discussed "killing Zionists".

The motion also committed the party to supporting a public inquiry into the circumstances leading to Arday's death and completing the cancelled second stage of the Leveson inquiry into press misconduct. Arday had stepped down as a Cambridge professor after being accused of plagiarism.

Free speech is universal or it's worth nothing, Alex Massie, Comment, page 19

‘I clearly have a very unhealthy appetite for risk’

After almost dying in childbirth, Claire Coutinho is excited to be pregnant again, she tells **Steven Swinford**

In June, Claire Coutinho made political history. Unbeknown to many of her colleagues in the Commons, she became the first party leader or stand-in to conduct prime minister’s questions while pregnant.

“Kemi called me up to say can you do PMQs,” she recalls. “And I said the first thing I need to check is whether I can stand up and sit down six times in a row and luckily I could.

“So I agreed to do it and I had Mel Stride [the shadow chancellor] who sat at my right and said he’d give me a big shove if I needed extra help getting up.”

Coutinho, the shadow energy secretary, is now seven months pregnant and looking forward to the birth of her second son in the autumn. It will be a moment of joy in more ways than one.

The birth of her first son, Rafael, was beset by trauma. First, she nearly lost him when he failed to breathe for 15 minutes after birth. Then she nearly died herself after a rare life-threatening condition left her in a medically induced coma with multiple organ failure.

This time, her pregnancy has been far smoother. “They’re monitoring me very closely and I’m surprisingly excited,” she says.

“I’ve clearly got a very unhealthy appetite for personal risk. But our first child has been such a joy in our life so we are excited for the next chapter.”

Before she heads off on maternity leave, Coutinho is launching a report by Onward, a right-leaning think tank, on the costs of net zero. It models the impact of the government’s plans for zero emissions by 2050 against an “alternative pathway”, effectively the Tories’ policy, of ending subsidies for wind and solar power and instead retaining a significant nuclear and gas base.

The report warns that Britain cannot “build an economy that is dictated by the vagaries of the weather”, a reference to the intermittent nature of the supply from solar and wind farms, and instead needs a mix of nuclear, gas and renewable energy.

It claims the approach would save Britain £320 billion between 2030 and 2050, the equivalent of £540 a year per household, in the form of lower network costs, wholesale prices and subsidies.

“What we’ve all been told time after time is that all this wind and solar is going to be cheap,” Coutinho says. “But actually when you have too much in the system, it means that your electricity becomes very unpredictable.

“You have to pay all these extra costs when it’s too windy to switch farms off, you have to pay all these extra costs when it’s not windy enough for this expensive backup. You have to build all these extra pylons and grid to connect those wind farms up in Scotland down to where energy is needed.

“The point that the report is making is that you can actually have an electricity system which is still clean but is considerably cheaper.

“For far too long we have been pursuing an ideological approach to energy as opposed to one that’s based on facts. As the report says, we used to have an energy system that depended on the weather 300 years ago but we were considerably poorer.”

The Tory vision is based on “a lot more nuclear”, three times more than the generation capacity at present, and “a bit more gas”. Funding for new wind and solar energy would come to an end in the early 2030s.

“The benefit of nuclear and gas, the power that you can rely on, is that it doesn’t come with all these extra hidden costs,” Coutinho says.

“You don’t need to have a back-up system. You also build far less grid to connect them into the power system. The problem with wind and solar is that it’s very diffuse.”

She adds: “You can squeeze out every last piece of carbon from the electricity system and make it super expensive. But it’s a completely nonsensical approach to say you want to protect the environment by making your electricity 100 per cent clean, but unaffordable for anyone that wants to use it.”

Andy Burnham, the new prime minister, is prepared to give the green light to new oil and gas drilling at Jackdaw as soon as next month.

“My worry is if you look at some of the policies they’re talking about now it really is tinkering around the edges,” she says. “It’s not enough to sign off one oilfield in the North Sea and keep a ban on new licences.”

She says that President Trump, who has called the moratorium on new oil and gas drilling in the North Sea “stupid”, is right.

“The North Sea is a foundational industry upon which the basis of our modern economy is founded,” she says. “Why on earth would we shoot ourselves in the face by shutting down an industry we need.”

There appear to be striking similarities between the Tories’ policy on net zero and that of Reform UK and Nigel Farage, but Coutinho disagrees.

“It’s not enough to just say ‘net stupid zero’, click your fingers and hope that’s going to cut people’s bills,” she says.

“Energy is a technical policy area. You need to do hard yards, whether that’s looking at serious costings of renewables or working out how you rewire the market mechanisms. That’s the work we’re doing.”

Coutinho herself is in the market for a new car for her growing family, needing an upgrade on her ageing Nissan Micra. She is open to going electric, but with a caveat.

“For me the biggest driver for what we adopt in our family is going to be cost,” she says. “I think that’s true for most of the country.”

Burnham should ignore the North Sea naysayers, leading article, page 23
Letters, page 22

TOBY SHEPHEARD FOR THE TIMES

Claire Countinho is seven months pregnant after a traumatic first labour

Net-zero will add £500 to bills, ministers told

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Labour’s pursuit of net zero will cost households an average of £500 extra a year because it relies on the “vagaries of the British weather”, a report backed by the Conservatives claims.

Onward, a right-leaning think tank, modelled the government’s net-zero policy against Tory plans to end subsidies for wind and solar energy from the early 2030s and instead rely on a mix of nuclear, gas and renewables.

Its report says that the approach would save Britain £320 billion between 2030 and 2050 — equivalent to £540 a year per household — in the form of lower network costs, lower wholesale prices, the removal of carbon taxes and lower subsidies.

Over half the savings would come from reducing the need to build so many pylons and cables to connect distant wind and solar farms to the grid.

The report says: “The real cause [of the UK’s relatively high electricity costs] is that the UK is building an expensive electricity system. One that requires massive investment in not just generation assets, but transmission, storage and interconnectors too.”

It says Britain’s attempt to become the “Saudi Arabia of wind” has not paid off because of the higher infrastructure costs and fluctuations in supply. “It is undesirable to build an economy that is dictated by the vagaries of the British weather,” the report says.

Under the Tory plans 80 per cent of Britain’s electricity would still be from “clean” sources. They say they would reduce emissions “in a way that the public can get behind”.

Both the Conservatives and Reform UK have pledged to scrap net-zero targets if they win the next election.

Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, has said achieving zero emissions by 2050 will be impossible “without a serious drop in living standards” or the country going bankrupt.

She said: “Net-zero targets have driven up energy costs, weakened our industrial base and made us more dependent on energy imports, while doing too little to make the country more resilient to floods, droughts and other consequences of the changing climate.

“This report shows what a commonsense approach looks like. Unlike Labour, who are wedded to the old failing plans, or Reform, who still don’t believe climate change is happening, the Conservatives will protect our environment, protect our energy security and make energy cheaper.”

Miatta Fahnbulleh, the energy secretary, said: “By following Reform’s lead, the Tories will tie Britain to the fossil fuel rollercoaster and keep bills higher for families.

“Labour is investing in more clean energy jobs, cutting tax on electricity bills to give families breathing space this winter and taking action to tackle the climate crisis and bring down bills for good. Kemi Badenoch would put jobs at risk and increase bills.

“As global fossil fuel prices continue to rise amid conflict overseas and wildfires rage across the UK, we can’t turn our back on clean power. That won’t bring down bills and it won’t address the climate.”

Green energy boss now backs North Sea drilling

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

A green energy boss who is also one of the Labour Party’s biggest donors has reversed his opposition to allowing new oil and gas drilling in the North Sea.

Dale Vince said it was “pragmatic” to reap the benefits of saving jobs by approving the Jackdaw and Rosebank developments, so long as these were combined with wholesale price controls.

He still urged Labour not to “row back” on its net zero commitments, but added it was a “reality” that fossil fuels would continue to be part of Britain’s energy mix for decades to come.

Ministers are considering whether to allow drilling in the two fields, after consultations closed for Jackdaw and Rosebank. The Times was told that Andy Burnham would announce a decision in the autumn, amid concerns about a backlash from Labour MPs given warnings about climate change fuelling Britain’s recent extreme heat.

However, opposition appeared to soften from Vince, whose firm Ecotricity has donated more than £6 million to Labour since 2014. Vince called for measures to be introduced that would “price control” energy extracted from the North Sea, instead of allowing the wholesale cost to be set by the global market. He told the BBC’s *Newsnight*: “If we do that, we pave the way to make sense of Rosebank and Jackdaw, new drilling sites that are already licensed, because we can save money. And then this secondary argument that’s being made for new drilling — that if we’re going to use fossil fuels, we might as well make them here [instead of importing from abroad] — that makes more sense and comes to the fore.”

- Britain risks running out of gas in the 2030s, despite its growing clean energy supply, unless ministers take “unprecedented” action to guard against a future supply shock, according to an official assessment reported by The Guardian. A consultation found that under a “high stress scenario”, homes and businesses could be left without gas within the decade, as North Sea reserves continue to deplete. The government is now considering direct financial support to safeguard ageing infrastructure, including payments to the owners of storage facilities and pipeline operators to make it economic to upgrade and maintain them.

Three from one family die swimming in rough seas

Lara Wildenberg, Ed Halford, Herbie Russell

Two adults and a teenage girl from the same family have died after being pulled from the water at a harbour on the West Sussex coast near Brighton.

Emergency services including two helicopters attended the port at Shoreham-by-Sea shortly before 3pm yesterday. Sussex police said that they had responded to reports of "four people in difficulty in the water close to Shoreham Fort", a mid-19th-century structure at the entrance to the harbour

The force later confirmed that a man, a woman and a teenage girl had died, while a younger girl had been taken to hospital in a critical condition.

Chief Superintendent James Collis said: "Around 2.40pm emergency services were called to a report of four people in difficulty in the water close to Shoreham Fort.

"Sussex police supported His Majesty's Coast Guard and the RNLI as all four people were brought to shore.

"Tragically, despite the best efforts of paramedics, three people, a man, a woman and a teenage girl were sadly confirmed deceased.

"A younger girl has been taken to hospital and is in critical condition. We can confirm all four people were from the same family and their next of kin have been informed. Specialist officers are supporting them at this incredibly difficult time and our thoughts are with their friends and family.

"I know this incident will have had a profound effect on the community and inquiries are ongoing. At this point we believe all four entered the water from the land for a swim and sadly got into difficulty.

"I would like to thank the public for their patience and understanding during this emergency response. Anyone with any information or video footage that could assist in our inquiries are asked to contact us online or 101, quoting Operation North."

Shoreham Port sits at the tidal mouth of the River Adur. On its western side is Shoreham Fort, a Palmerston Fort built in 1857 to defend against Napoleon III. Scores of emergency vehicles gathered opposite, at the north of the harbour, near the RNLI lifeboat station, Kingston Beach and Southwick Lighthouse.

UNPIXS/BBC; EDDIE MITCHELL FOR THE TIMES

Members of the emergency services at Shoreham yesterday after four people got into difficulty in the sea and three died

Fishermen who were nearby told ITV News that they had contacted the emergency services after seeing a young girl in the water and later spotted a young boy, a woman and a man.

Locals said that the area had been experiencing windy weather.

Ben Nash, 50, who lives opposite the lighthouse, said: "The harbour itself is really calm but beyond that it gets rough and scary. It was proper windy and choppy today."

Louise Marshall, 51, who lives opposite Kingston Beach, said: "This bay area is really calm. I swim in it every day but further out it can be really rough and I suppose it has been quite rough today. It can be really dangerous in the sea, especially if you don't know what you're doing." Alfie, 18, who declined to give his surname, said: "Growing up, we'd jump in and around there during summer. It was never a problem in terms of the water. It's a popular swimming spot."

Shelley Ayres came home from work to find the A259 closed and the emergency services responding to the incident. "We have never known this," she said. "The sea has been very calm for months and months, but today it has got a lot rougher."

Earlier, Tom Rutland, Labour MP for East Worthing & Shoreham, wrote on X: "I am deeply concerned by the reports of a number of people getting into difficulty in the water near Shoreham Harbour this afternoon. My thoughts are with everyone involved and their loved ones at what will undoubtedly be an extremely worrying time."

Murderer had served time for similar killing abroad

A convicted murderer came to the UK and committed a second almost identical killing only three years after being released from prison in Romania, it can now be reported.

Eugeniu Neamtu, 59, known as Jimmy, was jailed in his home country in May 2007 for murdering his housemate by stabbing him in the chest in a row over money.

He was freed in 2023 and moved to Walthamstow, east London, where in February this year he stabbed a flatmate in the chest in "strikingly similar" circumstances, a court was told.

Neamtu's earlier conviction can only now be reported after he was found guilty at the Old Bailey of murdering a fellow Romanian, Gheorghe Trica, 63.

Philip Evans KC, for the prosecution, said there had been an argument between the two men at the flat they shared in Walthamstow.

Both had shouted insults and Trica was heard to say: "Give me back those £5." At one point a bystander exclaimed: "Oh my God, he has cut Trica," and the victim was found in a pool of blood.

Afterwards, Neamtu was seen to throw something into the garden. A steak knife was found by police.

Neamtu claimed after his arrest that Trica had threatened to kill him, pushed him down the stairs and made throat-slitting gestures. He said he had picked up the knife from the kitchen to "scare" Trica and stabbed him in the chest to protect himself.

Evans told the jury that Neamtu had stabbed another man in 2007 and tried to dispose of the knife. As in this case, he had cast blame on the victim and claimed he acted in self-defence.

He said: "In both cases the defendant was involved in a drunken argument with an associate over money.

"In both cases he took up a knife from within the home. In both cases he stabbed the other man in the chest. In both cases he later claimed that he acted in self-defence."

Neamtu denied murder but declined to give evidence. The jury deliberated for three hours to find him guilty yesterday.

After the verdict, Judge Richard Marks told the jury that the victim in Romania had died. He remanded the defendant in custody to be sentenced on Friday.

I feel robbed, Barnett says of surgery

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Emma Barnett, the BBC presenter, has opened up about the hysterectomy she "never wanted to have" after suffering from endometriosis since her teens.

As she prepared to return to her role on Radio 4's *Today* programme this morning, the mother of two, who has called the condition a "silent emergency wreaking havoc", said she had been through "one of the most humbling experiences" of her life.

Barnett, 41, was admitted to hospital in June, before her documentary, *Fighting Endometriosis*, was shown on BBC2.

"It was totally surreal but there I was," she wrote in her Substack blog, *Trying with Emma Barnett*. "All wired up to drips and bedbound, squinting at the TV screen watching myself talk with other women in the painful know about this horrific disease." Two days before it was broadcast, Barnett had extensive surgery in which her gallbladder and womb were removed.

"I felt blindsided and robbed," she wrote. " Even though my care had been superb and doctors, utterly brilliant. But this was not the road I had envisioned for myself. I had the hysterectomy I never wanted to have."

Barnett acknowledged the situation of women whose wombs were removed without them having children if they had wanted them. However, the prospect of major surgery remained "frightening".

"I wanted there to have been medicine or treatment to help my endometriosis. It felt and feels too extreme," she said. Previous surgical procedures had failed to solve the problem, leaving Barnett resigned to seeking relief using diet, hormones and "anything else that could help women locked in this situation".

The presenter is back on air after a hysterectomy

However, worsening pain, adenomyosis and a gallbladder condition caused her to change her mind.

"I was poorly. In a way that was different to endo and adeno poorly.

"It was all the time."

Barnett said she was still recovering 11 "interminable" weeks later.

"This period has been and continues to be one of the most humbling experiences of my life," she said. "Early indications are that the pain is very much improved — although I am still healing from the surgery itself, so that also feels uncertain and frightening to admit — even to myself."

Retailers slow to pass fuel price falls to drivers

Petrol stations are not passing on changes in wholesale prices quickly enough, the UK's competitions watchdog has revealed.

More than a thousand warning letters have been sent to retailers that failed to send the data to the government's Fuel Finder price comparison service.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) raised concerns in its latest quarterly update on the fuel market about "passive pricing strategies" used by the majority of retailers, which it said were helping to keep profit margins high as the Iran war keeps costs rising for drivers.

It found that falls in wholesale diesel prices in May and June had not been immediately passed on to drivers, when doing so could have boosted competition in the market. The CMA said that while costs at fuel pumps had fallen in June overall, they remained significantly higher than before the Iran war, and retailer profit margins were at or above the historically high levels of 2025, though it did not find evidence of profiteering among fuel retailers on the back of the Middle East conflict.

The CMA said it had sent 1,166 letters to retailers and 53 compliance notices since April warning of a failure to register with the Fuel Finder scheme.

It said that about 97 per cent of service stations, selling about 99 per cent of fuel used in the UK, were registered, and it had not yet issued any fines.

The regulator said it would "actively monitor" the road fuel market and carry out a more detailed review in the autumn to ensure motorists were paying fair prices for fuel across the UK.

News

Dog owner bailed over fatal attack

Mario Ledwith

A farrier has appeared in court charged with manslaughter after his German shepherd dog fatally attacked a man during an argument over a right of way.

Lee Ellis, 55, is accused of being responsible for the death of James Judge, also 55, after an altercation on a footpath on Saturday.

A court heard that Judge suffered bite wounds to his torso and behind his right knee during the incident on a disused rail line outside Calder Grove, a village in West Yorkshire. Police officers found Judge in a critical condition after being alerted on Saturday afternoon. He later died in hospital.

Lee Ellis has yet to enter a plea and has been bailed

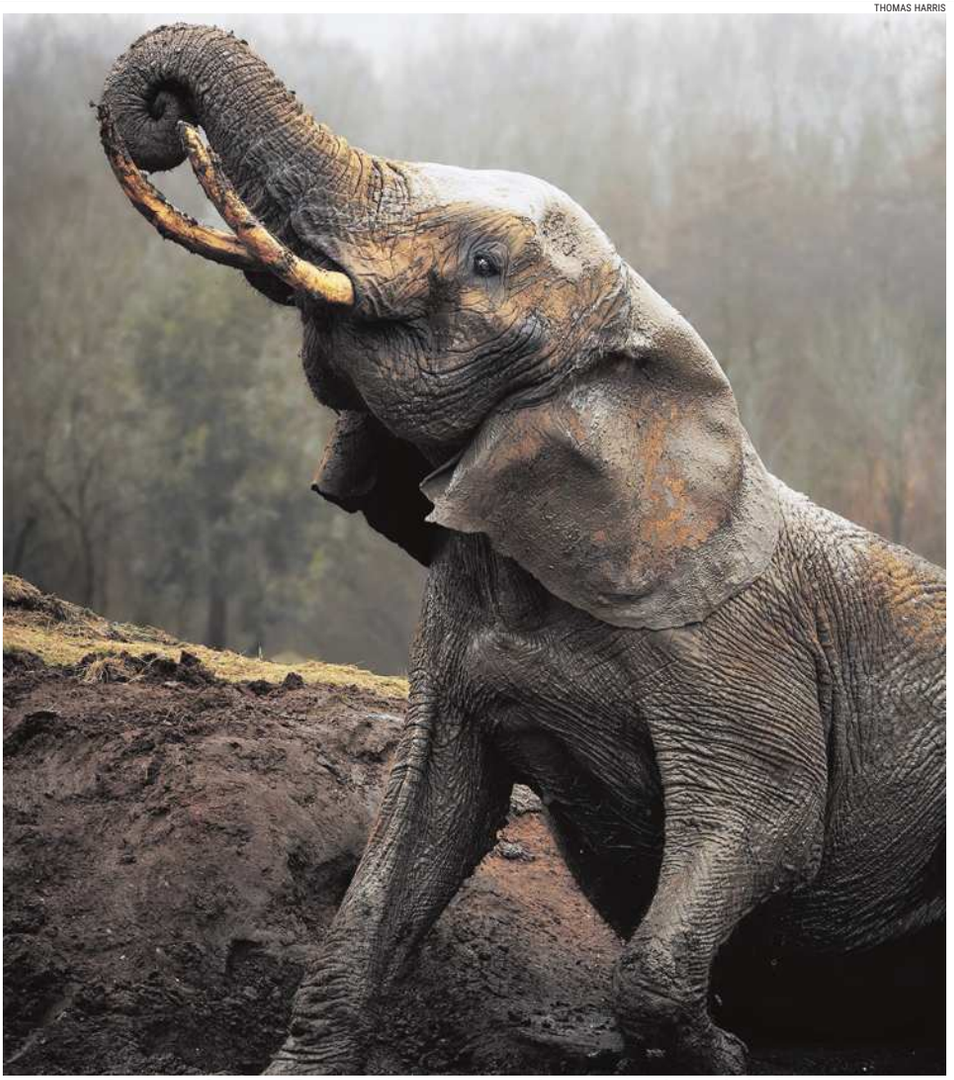
Ellis, who was arrested at the scene, appeared before Bradford magistrates' court yesterday. He is further charged with being in charge of a dangerously out of control dog that caused injury resulting in death.

Rob Fones, the solicitor representing Ellis, told a judge the defendant informed police that he was walking with his two dogs on the footpath near his house when he came across Judge. Fones said that there was "a verbal altercation in regards to right of way".

Ellis was not asked to enter a plea to the charges. District Judge Mark Daley bailed him to appear at Leeds crown court on September 16 with the condition he sleeps at his home address.

A German shepherd dog seized as part of the investigation remains in police kennels.

THOMAS HARRIS



Playing dirty Opal, one of Colchester Zoo's four African elephants, enjoys a mud bath in the winning image of the mammals category of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums annual photography competition

Man 'leaked addresses of migrants'

Herbie Russell

A Serco employee accused of leaking the addresses of homes housing asylum seekers has been charged with misconduct in public office.

Three nights of unrest earlier this month saw anti-immigration rioters launch projectiles at multiple properties. Police officers were hit with a rock, bitten and spat at, resulting in 21 arrests.

James Jobson, 62, of Costessey, Norfolk, who works for the multinational firm, appeared at Ipswich magistrates' court on Monday. He was remanded in custody to appear at Norwich crown court on September 14.

Serco provides outsourced public services including housing and support for asylum seekers.

Norfolk police said: "The hearing was in connection with the release of information relating to a number of addresses in Thetford, which were later targeted during several nights of violent disorder in the town." Footage shared online had shown officers escorting five men out of one of the properties amid shouts of "get out".

A Serco spokesman said: "This matter is currently being handled by the police, and we are co-operating fully.As this relates to an ongoing legal process, it would be inappropriate to comment further."

Mobs of up to 100 people had opposed the placement of asylum seekers in houses and more than 1,000 men at RAF Barnham, a former air base one mile outside Thetford.

The government has been placing migrants in houses of multiple occupancy after widespread opposition to the use of hotels.

In June, the government announced plans to place 3,750 migrants in former military bases in Oxfordshire, Suffolk and North Yorkshire.

Corruption arrests at Police Federation HQ

Ben Ellery Deputy Chief Reporter

Two serving police officers have been arrested by anticorruption officers investigating allegations of fraud and bribery linked to the Police Federation.

The officers were among four suspects arrested yesterday morning at the federation's headquarters in Leatherhead, Surrey.

It marks a significant escalation in the inquiry into the organisation, which represents more than 145,000 rank and file police officers. A total of seven people have been arrested.

The latest arrests were carried out by the City of London police's domestic corruption unit.

Mukund Krishna, the federation's chief executive, and two other senior officials were arrested in March on suspicion of fraud by abuse of position.

Krishna subsequently had his contract terminated. He has denied wrongdoing.

Krishna, a former management consultant, was appointed chief executive in July 2023 as part of an attempt to bring professional and independent support to the federation's senior decision-making. His role included responsibility for its day-to-day running, corporate governance and developing systems and procedures intended to ensure robust decision-making.

The arrests linked to the federation are part of Operation Kuat. No charges have been brought and an arrest does not imply guilt.

Police said that a woman in her fifties was arrested on suspicion of bribery, fraud by abuse of position of trust and fraud by failing to disclose information. A second woman in her fifties was arrested on suspicion of fraud by abuse of position of trust.

A man in his fifties was arrested on suspicion of bribery, fraud by abuse of position of trust and fraud by failing to disclose information. A man in his forties was arrested on suspicion of fraud by abuse of position of trust.

Detective Superintendent Jim Halkett, of the corruption unit, said: "Our investigation continues to make significant progress, with officers working through a number of lines of inquiry to establish the full facts and circumstances surrounding this case.

"We would like to thank everyone who has already come forward with information. This has been valuable and continues to play an important role in helping us move our inquiries forward.

"This remains a complex and high-profile investigation, and we recognise the public and media interest in it."

The Police Federation is the staff association for officers in England and Wales up to the rank of chief inspector. It is not a trade union because police officers are prohibited from striking and taking certain forms of industrial action.

It was established in 1919 and is governed by rules and regulations set by the government. Its statutory responsibilities include representing officers on discipline, welfare, pensions and other issues.

The organisation has been undergoing an overhaul of its governance. An independent review published in April last year came after an examination of "governance and leadership failings" connected to its handling of a police pensions challenge.

The review made recommendations covering the federation's culture, governance and campaigning.

City of London police have appealed for current and former employees, representatives and others with information relevant to the investigation to come forward.

The federation declined to comment.

Detectives investigated after Levy was left free to kill

The police watchdog is investigating the actions of two British Transport Police detectives after a serial sex offender was left free to murder two women and rape a third.

Simon Levy's crime spree lasted from 2018 to 2025 and included two murders and multiple sex attacks on women in public.

The BTP, the Metropolitan Police and the Crown Prosecution Service have all admitted failings in how they dealt with Levy, who was on bail as his attacks on women escalated.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct yesterday said it was investigating the conduct of two BTP detectives over "alleged failures to progress or supervise an investigation" into two reported sexual assaults by Levy on the London Underground in October 2024.

It had previously said that an investigation into alleged failures by two Met officers in managing Levy after he was released from prison on licence in February 2023 was "ongoing".

The watchdog said: "Levy was arrested in November 2024 ... but was bailed to return to custody in January, with his bail further extended twice until May 2025 ... During this period, Levy committed multiple further sexual assaults on trains, and other serious offences, including murder."

The BTP said: "It's in the public interest for independent and objective scrutiny to be applied, and we will fully co-operate."

Levy, 40, was jailed for the rest of his life this month after being convicted of the murders of Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo, 53, in March 2025 and Sheryl Wilkins, 39, in August that year. He had raped a woman in January 2025 in the car park where Wilkins's body was later found. The victim told police where her attacker lived.

Levy had been jailed in 2021 for groping two women in 2018. While behind bars in 2022, he sexually assaulted a prison guard but was released the following year, going on to sexually assault a woman on the Tube in October 2023 and allegedly rape another in May 2024. He was recalled to prison and released in August 2024.

Levy was arrested by the BTP in November 2024 for sexual assaults on the Tube, but delays left him free to carry out the rape and first murder. The murders were interspersed with sexual assaults on six women.

After Valencia-Trujillo's murder, Levy was released on bail at two magistrates' court hearings in May and June 2025. The Crown Prosecution Service admitted it had not opposed bail at the first hearing, and the prosecutor had not given the court all the relevant information at the second. Levy then failed to attend three Crown Court hearings, but no arrest warrant was requested.

After the wildfires, heavy showers could result in flash flooding

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

Britain faces a dual threat of flash flooding and the lingering risk of wildfires this week as rain returns at last to parched ground, a leading fire official has warned. Wisley in Surrey has gone 61 days without rain, while drought still grips all of Wales and most of England.

Although cooler weather is arriving, the UK's top wildfire adviser warned that brief downpours would do little to dampen the threat of further blazes.

"We're not out of the woods yet," said Dave Swallow of the National Fire Chiefs Council. "The forecast is for showers and they may be heavy in places. But it takes only a few hours of dry weather for conditions to become ripe for a wildfire."

Multiple fires are raging across south Wales and Swallow urged the public to remain vigilant, avoiding activities that could start new blazes. He said fire and rescue services were bracing for more fires, as forecasts suggest there could be a sixth heatwave next month.

Swallow welcomed the use of the emergency test alert last Friday, which he said had come amid "real significant incidents" in the West Midlands and fears of fires elsewhere. He rejected the idea that rewilding was to blame for this summer's wildfires. Many have happened on managed land. "Probably the biggest impact [driver] is that we're a green and pleasant land," he said.

Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, meanwhile, asked the public to refrain from dialling 999 to report neighbours having barbecues in their gardens.

There were eight active wildfires as of Monday night, according to the National Fire Chiefs Council. Three major incidents were in place in South Wales, Cambridgeshire and the West Midlands. Fire and rescue services in England and Wales have responded to 1,140 wildfires this year.

The Met Office expects frequent, heavy showers, possibly bringing hail and thunder, in Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England today. Many parts of the UK could experience downpours tomorrow.

Heavy rain could run off very dry ground rather than soaking into the soil. "When the weather breaks, we are more likely to see some devastating flash flooding," said Emma Howard Boyd, a former chair of the Environment Agency, who has advised the mayor of London on climate change.

The Green Man festival in Crickhowell, Powys, has cancelled an annual tradition for the first time in more than 20 years over the risks of wildfires. It usually closes with the burning of a wooden "Green Man" sculpture.

Weather, page 49

Facemasks have become a must-have for revellers, including at Boomtown, far left. Faye Jawad, below, left Maiden Voyage early because of the dust

Masks return to fight drought dust

Discarded or consigned to the back of the wardrobe in the intervening years since Covid-19 — most of us could not wait to be rid of facemasks by the time it was safe to do so (Esme Hewitt writes).

But in one area of public life, they have made something of a comeback due to a new problem this summer: drought dust.

As fields up and down the country turned to straw in recent weeks, the accompanying dust has been causing havoc for British festivalgoers as "apocalyptic" dust clouds are blown into the air by dancing revellers, choking-up airways.

Florence Head, 27, a festival veteran, was not to be deterred despite concerns she had seen on social media about excessive levels of dust at UK music festivals. At the drum and bass festival Boomtown, in the South Downs National Park this weekend, she turned her face covering into an unlikely fashion accessory.

Head, who has been attending festivals for 16 years, said: "It's definitely the worst dust level I've seen at a festival."

She said she was strict with wearing her FFP3 mask and in doing so she managed to dodge the "dreadful coughs" that other attendees from the first day developed.

Head said it felt like she was "partying in a desert" and that when "everyone danced at once, big clouds of dust would go into the air".

Faye Jawad, 26, attended Maiden Voyage in Burgess Park, south London, at the beginning of the month and also wore two layers of mask — one of the surgical variety and the other a bandana that matched her outfit.

Jawad still had to leave early after three hours. When leaving the festival grounds, the view from a distance showed it "completely engulfed in a cloud of dust", she said.

Jess Fenn, 29, attended Houghton Festival in Norfolk this month where she said the dust was "apocalyptic" and her voice did not return to normal for a week.

Staff at the Houghton Festival handed out masks at the medical tents and laid wood chippings on the ground, which Fenn thinks helped to manage the dust kicked up by thousands of attendees.

Professor Howard Branley, a consultant in respiratory medicine, said the dust could potentially be full of harmful bacteria. "We don't know what's in the dust, it's a mix of soil, vegetation, fungal spores, pollen, potentially anything that people have dropped there," he said.

Dr Bana Hawramy, a consultant in pulmonology, said: "While resting after a festival helps, anyone whose cough persists for more than four days should seek an assessment from their GP so they can be treated properly."

Festival death woman was Ibiza DJ

Seren Hughes

A woman who died at a music festival in the grounds of a stately home in Norfolk was a British DJ based on the Spanish island of Ibiza.

Santanna Maria Ally, 38, died after being found unconscious inside a tent on the evening of August 9, the final day of the Houghton Festival.

The dance music festival is held in the grounds of Houghton Hall and music continues non-stop.

An inquest opening at Norfolk coroner's court in Norwich on Tuesday was told that the provisional medical cause of Ally's death was hanging. Ally, known by her stage name Santanna Oush, was formally identified by her friend, Amber Matheson. Her sister, Katy Ally, confirmed she was born in London on May 15, 1988, worked as a DJ and usually lived in Ibiza.

Norfolk police previously said the death was being treated as unexplained but was not believed to be suspicious. Despite the efforts of officers and the onsite medical team, Ally was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ally lived in the north of Ibiza and had performed at well-known venues including Pikes and Hï Ibiza. She had been DJing for more than 20 years, first alongside her work in sales before going full time 11 years ago. She founded OuShe, a platform to support women in music, many of whom she taught to DJ, six years ago. It has hosted events in Ibiza, London and Biarritz.

Ally also hosted a Thursday afternoon show on Ibiza Sonica Radio and had just started an open mic night. Last year she spoke about making her own music.

Tributes shared on social media remembered Ally as "the most electrifying bolt of energy" and "the most beautiful human inside and out". One described her as having the rare gift of bringing people together.

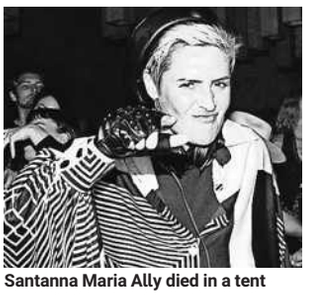
A fundraiser set up to cover funeral costs has raised more than £8,000. Its creator, Marcus Eppy, said Ally had a heart of gold and would do anything for anyone at any time of day.

He said: "Her love and passion for music and to spread the love was phenomenal and [she] was always the life and soul of the party. From a quiet meditation session to a full-scale party, she would do everything to make it happen and make sure everyone was having the time of their lives and making the best memories they can.

"The family would like to thank everyone and hope that many will come and celebrate the life of Santanna [who] touched so many hearts."

The coroner, Yvonne Blake, asked for Ally's GP records and invited the family to provide relevant background details.

Houghton Festival previously said:



Santanna Maria Ally died in a tent

"We are deeply saddened to confirm that a person has passed away at Houghton 2026. Our thoughts are entirely with their family and loved ones at this difficult time. We are grateful to our onsite medical team, event response team and to Norfolk Constabulary, who all responded immediately. We continue to work closely with the relevant authorities to support in any way we can with their investigations."

The festival took place from August 6 to 9 and was attended by about 10,000 people. It was founded in 2017 by Craig Richards, a DJ and Saturday night musical director at the London nightclub Fabric.

Houghton Festival is set in the woods in the grounds of the home of the 7th Marquess of Cholmondeley, David Cholmondeley, and his wife, Rose Hanbury. In 2023 the Princess of Wales was said to have attended the festival after having dinner at Houghton Hall, which neighbours Anmer Hall, the Prince and Princess of Wales's country home on the Sandringham estate.

The inquest was adjourned until December 15.

You can contact Samaritans day or night, 365 days a year. Call them free on 116 123 or visit samaritans.org

News

Living history The drought has revealed the outline of a Second World War prison camp built on what is now the Dinefwr nature reserve in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire

Thief fingered by print on bag for life

A serial burglar has been jailed for 12 years after a fingerprint from a Sainsbury's bag for life revealed his identity.

Charlie Woodford, 27, was linked to the theft of more than £127,000 of goods in a series of commercial burglaries between August 2024 and May 2025 in Surrey, Hampshire, and Somerset. He was part of a group of burglars who ransacked a string of businesses using a crowbar to force entry after hours and targeting cash and stock.

CCTV showed the offenders storming into shops with a big white bag, wearing gloves and face-coverings.

Other recordings showed Woodford bragging about raids, claiming his car boot was "jammed full" of stolen goods.

But an orange reusable Sainsbury's bag left behind at the scene of a burglary at an optician's in Haslemere, Surrey, uncovered a vital clue. It contained a fingerprint belonging to Woodford.

Woodford, of Southampton, was charged with a robbery in Hampshire and conspiracy to commit burglary covering 19 offences across Surrey, Hampshire and Somerset. He was sentenced at Southampton crown court on July 31. He will serve two consecutive sentences totalling 12 years and six months — ten years and six months for a robbery in Hampshire, and two years for conspiracy to commit burglary.

Early release exemptions fuel anger

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Domestic abuse campaigners have accused Andy Burnham of "cherry-picking" prisoners he wants excluded from the early release scheme, warning it will "undermine public protection".

They said that the government's plan — to stop prisoners convicted of unlawful manslaughter benefiting from the scheme, but not other forms of manslaughter — was "inconceivable" and an insult to victims of domestic abuse.

The plans to exclude unlawful manslaughter are being considered to prevent PC Andrew Harper's killers, Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers, being let out of jail early. PC Harper was a Thames Valley police officer who was killed in 2019 aged 28 after responding to a quad bike theft in Berkshire.

Many killers in domestic abuse cases are convicted of voluntary manslaughter, which the Ministry of Justice said would still fall under the early release scheme. Voluntary manslaughter is an intentional killing mitigated from a murder charge owing to a partial defence such as a sudden rush of passion or a loss of self-control.

Campaigners said the government should either exclude all prisoners convicted of manslaughter or only those convicted of voluntary manslaughter. Hetti Barkworth-Nanton, chair of the domestic abuse charity Refuge, said that voluntary manslaughter was "a far more serious conviction".

She said: "How they can carve out a specific crime under involuntary manslaughter and not do anything about voluntary manslaughter is just inconceivable. You need to make sure that you are starting with the most serious crimes and working down, not just cherry-picking something in the middle because it happens to fit something that you're trying to achieve for ... two particular killers in this case. It will create injustice all over the place.

"Don't take one element of the less serious element of manslaughter and ring-fence that because it just will be an insult to every other victim's family."

Frank Mullane, of Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse, whose sister and nephew were murdered by her husband, said: "The government's first duty is to protect its citizens so we have to expect that governments will develop prison policy in a systematic way. Any other approach, ie an ad hoc one, not only ignores many victims ... it potentially undermines public protection."

The backlash exposes the challenge facing Alex Norris, the justice secretary, as he looks for a way to stop PC Harper's killers from qualifying from the early release scheme, which will come into effect from October. It is part of Labour's response to overcrowded jails.

About 5,000 prisoners will be freed in the first ten months of the scheme. About 470 prisoners are serving sentences for manslaughter.

Asked about the exemption for unlawful manslaughter, Burnham said yesterday: "At this moment in time, this is speculation, because I asked the justice secretary to develop a plan to maximise public safety and minimise the early release of prisoners."

He added: "It is important, given the public concern, that I do everything possible to get this right."

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Borough could hit households with 160% rise in council tax

Constance Kampfner
Political Correspondent

A London council is preparing England's biggest-ever council tax rise, which could result in the average bill going up by £800.

Conservative-run Wandsworth is preparing to increase bills by up to 160 per cent, breaking a record set by Worcestershire county council last year when it was given special permission for a 9 per cent increase.

Wandsworth, in southwest London, has one of the lowest council tax rates. Band D homes pay £1,020 a year. It is facing historically high borrowing, however, and a projected 40 per cent cut in funding from central government. The council said its reserves "are forecast to run out within three years if urgent action is not taken".

Politics Home first reported that councillors were proposing raising the tax by as much as 160 per cent, which would translate to a £800 increase for the average household.

The rise is expected to be implemented in April, before council tax is then frozen for the rest of the four-year term. Conservative councillors insisted residents would still pay one of the lowest council tax rates in the country.

Several London councils have been hit by Angela Rayner's redistribution of local authority funding, designed to ensure more Whitehall money goes to areas with the greatest needs. Under the review, the largest cuts to future funding settlements will affect Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Wandsworth, Westminster and the City of London, as well as Windsor & Maidenhead.

Ministers argue that the six authorities have had "historically very low bills" and have granted the councils permission to raise council tax by more than 5 per cent without a referendum for the next two years.

Westminster has said that it will have to cut services or raise council tax by up to 200 per cent after an "unprecedented" £100 million drop in funding.

Peter Graham, Wandsworth council's deputy leader, told The Times no rise had yet been agreed but confirmed that it was likely to be a "three-figure percentage increase". Graham blamed Labour, which ran Wandsworth for the previous four years, until May, for putting it in "financial crisis".

"They left behind a massive budget gap of £137 million," he said. "Doing nothing would mean bankruptcy or our council tax having to rise by 230 per cent. We are running a full spending review to find savings and efficiencies."

Simon Hogg, the previous leader, said Wandsworth under Labour had "the lowest council tax in the country, the highest reserves of any neighbouring borough and no external debt".

He said: "The new Conservative administration has brought chaos."

After the Conservatives took control in May, Aled Richards-Jones led the authority for 44 days before resigning last month, saying he could not give enough time to the role having being made a partner at his law firm, Mewburn Ellis. Two cabinet members then quit in protest over the election of Robert Morritt as his successor. Morritt had been expelled from the local Conservative group in 2013 after he became embroiled in an expenses scandal. Morritt has said the issue had been "investigated by the [Metropolitan Police] well over a decade ago and they concluded there was no case to answer".

He added: "We are getting to work repairing the damage left by the previous Labour administration."

THE WHITBY PHOTOGRAPHER/BNPS

Whitby tuna haul is quite the catch

Anglers and conservationists are heralding the first bluefin tuna to be caught and landed in the North Sea for almost 90 years. The fish, weighing 746lb was landed at Whitby in North Yorkshire. The port was once a hub for big game fishing in the 1950s and holds the long-standing British record for a bluefin tuna caught on rod and line; a 851lbs monster caught in 1933.

Hollywood stars such as Clark Gable and David Niven were drawn to the area for the chance to catch the enormous tuna.

But overfishing of herring stocks led to the big game species disappearing from the North Sea in the 1960s. Over the past ten years they have returned in huge numbers to the waters off the South West coast. Under Defra rules, a handful of fishing vessels is granted a licence to catch and land a small quota of bluefin tuna, which they can sell for thousands of pounds.

The crew of the Dominator caught what is thought to be the first landed in the area since 1939. Glenn Kilpatrick, known as the Whitby Photographer, said: "I watched Dominator return, sitting noticeably heavy to one side with the weight."

The University of Exeter is monitoring the return of bluefin tuna to the North Sea, which includes tagging fish.

Dr Lucy Hawkes, who is leading the research, said: "Bluefin tuna are supposed to be in our waters and used to be incredibly important to this region.

"Their presence is a good way of signalling your waters are doing well — but we have no idea where they've come from, which is why tagging is so important."

The fish was 746lb (53st). The British record for a bluefin tuna was set in 1933 by L. Mitchell-Henry with a 851lb fish

Lung recovery link to clean-air zone

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The recovery of children's lungs that were stunted by air pollution in London has been linked to its clean-air zone.

The city's introduction of the ultra-low emission zone (Ulez) seven years ago allowed researchers to conduct a "natural experiment" on how the intervention affected children's lung development.

A study led by teams at Queen Mary University of London and Imperial College London followed more than 3,400 children aged six to nine years old for five years.

By comparing pupils in central London with a similar group in Luton, the researchers found that reduced levels of nitrogen dioxide, a toxic gas produced by diesel vehicles, were associated with significant recovery of their lungs.

Before the Ulez took effect, deterring drivers of older diesel cars with a daily charge, the children in London had been exposed to dirtier air and had less effective lungs. Their lung function was tested by asking them to take the deepest breath possible and blow the air out as hard and as fast as they could into a tube.

By the end of the study, a key measure of lung function among the Londoners had reached parity with that of their Luton counterparts.

The researchers said the findings suggested that children's lungs possessed a surprising ability to recover when the stress of pollution was reduced.

"Children have an extraordinary capability of recovery, of plasticity in their development," Chris Griffiths, professor of primary care at Queen Mary, said. "I think they're catching up because they've suffered disadvantage with respect to the pollution exposures in the past and the cleaner air is allowing that recovery."

Luton was chosen as a control because it had similar demographics but no plans for a clean-air zone. It was geographically far enough away to avoid being affected by the Ulez, but near enough for the scientists to visit. "I think it's highly unlikely that London children are inherently different to Luton children," Griffiths said.

The Ulez was expanded in 2023, despite opposition from several Tory-run boroughs. The researchers said their study, published in the Lancet on Monday, provided evidence to support the wider introduction of clean-air zones to benefit public health.

The authors noted that the study showed an association rather than causation. It is possible that the recovery in lung function was linked to increased exercise from more walking and cycling due to the Ulez, rather than just clean air. The study period also overlapped with the pandemic. There were major restrictions on transport in the months after the arrival of Covid-19 and a sustained drop-off in traffic even after rules were eased.

The authors said the study was not "entirely London-centric" and the findings could be relevant to other cities.

The Times's Clean Air for All campaign has called for stronger regulations to tackle sources of air pollution, from dirty cars to open fires.

Salmonella outbreak leaves one dead and hundreds sick

One person has died and hundreds have been affected by a food poisoning outbreak. The UK Health Security Agency said yesterday that the salmonella outbreak "may be linked to eggs imported from outside the UK".

The Food Standards Agency added that there was "no evidence that UK-produced eggs are affected". It said that investigations had identified links to imported eggs "mainly used by food service and catering establishments such as restaurants or cafés, as a potential source".

Salmonella causes gastroenteritis with symptoms including stomach cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting or fever.

The health security agency said that 207 salmonella cases had been confirmed between August 11 last year and August 1 this year, most of them in recent weeks. There were 199 in England, six in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. All involved the same strain, *Salmonella enteritidis*.

More than a third of those affected (38 per cent) were admitted to hospital, two developing bloodstream infections. The highest number of confirmed cases was in London, with 47, and Yorkshire and Humber with 38 the health security agency said. Those affected included babies and some as old as 90. Hannah Charles, lead epidemiologist for gastrointestinal infections at the health security agency, said: "We're working with Food Standards Agency and other public health agencies to investigate a salmonella outbreak that may be linked to eggs imported from outside the UK."

Jacquelyn McCormick, head of incidents at the food standards agency, said: "There is no evidence that UK-produced eggs are affected. We continue to advise people who are handling eggs, eggshells or egg packaging to always wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap and dry them properly afterwards."

News

Cancer cases missed under scheme to cut GP referrals

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Cancer cases have been missed and patients have been harmed because GPs are reducing referrals to hospitals as part of an NHS scheme, an investigation has found.

Since last year, the NHS has been urging GPs to seek "advice and guidance" (A&G) from hospital consultants where possible, instead of referring patients directly to a specialist. It is intended to allow more conditions to be managed in the community by family doctors, cutting hospital waiting lists.

GPs are paid £20 extra for every case where they seek advice rather than sending a patient to a hospital.

However, a report by the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) identified patient risks associated with the system, including delays to cancer diagnoses. It detailed two preventable deaths, linked to delays in responding to A&G requests. This included one patient who died from a seizure after a GP's request was not answered for a month. Another patient died while waiting for heart treatment because of a delay reviewing test results.

The report found evidence that A&G had "contributed to near misses and incidents of patient harm" where it had been poorly implemented. It said "harm had arisen as a result of delayed or missed diagnoses, and delays to care and treatment".

This included a case involving a patient with suspected skin cancer. Rather than referring the patient to hospital, the GP sent a photo to a specialist who did not examine the patient and missed the cancer, only for the patient to be diagnosed with melanoma six months later. In another case, a patient's endometrial cancer was missed after an admin error when the GP tried to seek a specialist's advice.

The HSSIB report also highlighted positives from the scheme, including improving communication between GPs and consultants and "enabling efficient specialist input into care".

The NHS is aiming to increase the annual number of A&G requests from GPs to four million this year, up from 2.4 million the year before, to cut unnecessary hospital referrals.

Nick Woodier, senior safety investigator at the HSSIB, said: "A&G services are making a real difference for patients in many parts of the NHS, and we heard genuine enthusiasm for what they can achieve. But we also heard serious concerns, and found evidence of harm where implementation has not been adequately designed or monitored.

"Our recommendations are about ensuring that expansion happens safely with the right support, standardisation and oversight in place to ensure patient safety is a priority."

A spokesperson for NHS England said: "As HSSIB acknowledges, A&G has positively influenced patient care by reducing waiting times and giving people quicker access to specialist advice, but we know more needs to be done to make it work even more effectively."

A survey of 712 GPs by Pulse found around a quarter of patient referrals are being rejected and returned as unsolicited A&G. Family doctors also estimated 36 per cent of the A&G they received asked them to do work considered outside their remit, while others raised concerns that the process was creating waits for people with suspected cancer.

Beccy Baird, senior fellow for primary care at the King's Fund think tank, said the investigation raised "serious questions" about how the scheme was being implemented.

ANITA MARIC /SWNS

Three's a crowd Georgie Eustace and her husband Oliver are going through 270 bottles and 40 packs of nappies a month after the birth of triplets Max, George and Edward. Only Max and George are identical as Edward was from a separate egg

Prostate scan can replace painful biopsy

Eleanor Hayward

Men can be diagnosed with some prostate cancers without the need for an invasive biopsy, research suggests.

More than 64,000 men in the UK get prostate cancer every year, and they are diagnosed by having an MRI scan followed by biopsies to take samples of prostate tissue. But a study by University College London Hospitals (UCLH) found that some men can be diagnosed by MRI scan alone, meaning they start treatment faster and avoid uncomfortable procedures.

The research looked at 880 men who attended UCLH's one-stop clinic for suspected prostate cancer over a one-year period. All of them had an MRI, which provides detailed images of what is happening in the body. Some 251 were deemed likely to have a tumour and 217 of these went on to have a biopsy, where a needle is put into the prostate to take a tissue sample.

Four experienced radiologists looked at scan results combined with the patient's age and their prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test score, and were asked to say whether they were "99 per cent certain" there was a tumour, "90 per cent certain" or less than 90 per cent certain".

All of the 69 patients deemed to be "99 per cent certain" they had a tumour via their MRI scan, had cancer confirmed through biopsy. Meanwhile, 40 of the 41 patients who were scored as being "90 per cent sure" of having a tumour had cancer confirmed. "In future this may enable treatment without the need for biopsy," the authors wrote in the European Journal of Radiology.

Alex Kirkham, a consultant radiologist at UCLH, said: "What surprised us was how confidently we could call some of these scans, even when the tumours were small or PSA levels looked unremarkable."

Mark Emberton, UCL professor of interventional oncology, said: "Globally, about 4-5 million prostate biopsies are carried out each year, yet in the NHS, the wait for a biopsy and its results is the most commonly breached target across all cancer pathways."

Dr Matthew Hobbs, director of research at Prostate Cancer UK, said: "Avoiding unnecessary biopsies is an important goal in prostate cancer care."

Acai, quinoa and other words that prove a mouthful

Mark Ludlow

The next time you order an acai smoothie at your local café and get a strange look from the waiter, do not worry — you are not alone.

The Brazilian fruit, which is commonly incorrectly pronounced as "ah-sigh", is the UK's most mispronounced word, according to a new survey. Also in the top ten are segue, charcuterie, Worcestershire, chipotle and gyro. Some Britons also struggled with espresso, colonel and necessarily.

The survey, conducted by OnePoll for the Czech car manufacturer Skoda, found 85 per cent of respondents had someone correct them after mispronouncing a word, leaving 25 per cent of people feeling embarrassed. As a result, 24 per cent of people said they were not confident when giving unfamiliar words a go. But 27 per cent of respondents admitted they continued to use the incorrect pronunciation of the word despite knowing it was wrong.

The study also found 85 per cent of adults believed correct pronunciation was important and 59 per cent of those believed it helped avoid misunderstandings. Others thought it showed respect for language (52 per cent), and made them appear more knowledgeable (38 per cent) or professional (34 per cent). More than a third (38 per cent) of respondents admitted the way someone pronounced words could influence the impression they had of them.

Attitudes towards mispronunciation varied across generations. Some 53 per cent of Gen Z claimed a person's pronunciation would impact what they thought of them, compared with 24 per cent of boomers. Likewise, 57 per cent of Gen Z corrected family, friends and colleagues on pronunciation, but only 29 per cent of boomers did the same.

For those who avoided correcting others, the most common reasons were not wanting to embarrass them (39 per cent), not wanting to come across as rude (35 per cent) and not feeling it was their place to do so (33 per cent). It also emerged that 47 per cent of adults believed words should be spelt the way they were said, but 30 per cent credited social media for making them more aware of how to pronounce words.

The research was commissioned by Skoda to highlight that many Britons pronounce the brand's name S-co-der" rather than the correct "Sh-co-da".

Even the natives have little idea, leading article, page 23

Take the test

1. **Acai**
(a) Ah-sigh
(b) Ah-sigh-ee
(c) Ack-eye
(d) Ack-eye-ee

2. **Segue**
(a) Segway
(b) Seeg
(c) Seg
(d) Seg-yoo

3. **Charcuterie**
(a) Char-koo-ter-ree
(b) Shar-koo-tuh-ree
(c) Shar-suit-ter-ree
(d) Char-cut-er-ee

4. **Quinoa**
(a) Kwin-wa
(b) Kwin-no-a
(c) Keen-wa
(d) Kwin-o-a

5. **Gnocchi**
(a) No-kee
(b) Nyock-kee
(c) Notch-ee
(d) Nyotch-ee

6. **Worcestershire**
(a) Wor-chest-er
(b) Wus-ter-sher
(c) Wor-ses-ter-sher
(d) Woos-ter-sher

7. **Chipotle**
(a) Chip-oh-tul
(b) Chi-poht-lay
(c) Ship-oh-tul
(d) Chip-ottle

1. Ah-sigh-ee
2. Segway
3. Shar-koo-tuh-ree
4. Keen-wa
5. Nyock-kee
6. Wus-ter-sher
7. Chi-poht-lay

TMS

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Snakes and career ladders

The exchequer secretary, Dan Tomlinson, is not immediately reminiscent of Indiana Jones, but he has something in common with the adventurer — they've both been courageous in the face of snakes. Tomlinson says that, when he was a councillor, a local resident called him to her flat because she had found a snake skin on their balcony, which was a turn up for the books in Tower Hamlets. She was convinced that some sort of basilisk was outside and wanted Tomlinson to personally remove it. "The whole family stood at the far side of the room as I paced up and down on the balcony," he said. "But, no snake." Tomlinson later discovered that a nearby tower block had a snake owner who had been drying skins and one had blown across in the wind, but the Labour man decided he didn't want to risk encountering any more venomous reptiles and went to Westminster instead.

You have to have sympathy for Stephen Morgan, the new farming minister, who had a funny turn at a food processing plant in the Lake District. He began to feel queasy as he went from the hot air outside into the deeply cold conditions of a refrigeration unit, where he was shown delicious cuts of beef. He passed out and one local farmer was unimpressed, saying: "It's not a great look for the farming minister to faint at the sight of meat."

DEAD RINGERS

Prank texts sent to Andy Burnham have revived the story of when the impressionist Jon Culshaw got through to No 10 while pretending to be William Hague, then leader of the opposition. The former Tory leader told Times Radio yesterday that Tony Blair realised something was up when Culshaw said "Tony" instead of "prime minister", but there was another reason he got suspicious. "He started asking if he could borrow Blair's *Cher* exercise video," Hague said. On another occasion, the impressionist Rory Bremner was ordered to stop impersonating John Major after the cabinet secretary told Channel 4: "Bremner's so good he could ring the chancellor and get the budget."

RUN FOR THE MONEY

Nigel Havers, below, was never supposed to go into acting. The star of *A Passage to India* tells Radio Oldie he was to be sent to a school he calls "Slough Grammar", but he persuaded his father (Michael Havers, later lord chancellor) that theatre school was a better idea. He did this by showing the comparison in fees, to which his father said: "That drama school looks rather attractive." The lawyer's instincts proved eternal when, years later, Havers rang his father from a set. "How's the film going?" his father asked. "It's going very well!" said Havers. "Would you like to invest some money?" The reply came: "Don't be f***ing ridiculous!" A pity. He could have made a lot of profit out of *Chariots of Fire*.

A strange symbol has appeared on the weather forecast, featuring a cloud with a blue dot underneath it. The return of rain has been achieved without the creation of a minister for drought, though some advised the PM to follow the precedent of 1976, when Denis Howell's appointment brought rains within days. People forget that Howell's appointment was too successful by half. The rains were so heavy that he then became minister for floods and the cycle was completed later that year when Howell was named minister for snow.

JACK BLACKBURN

News

Architect said he would kill clients' family in work dispute

Mark Ludlow

An architect has been struck off after a dispute with an oral surgeon and his beautician wife over a botched renovation in Hampshire, during which he threatened to kill the couple and their daughter.

Joan Beltri was found to have launched a "campaign of harassment, abuse and threats" towards his clients, Dr James Escoda-Francoli, 45, and Carolina Sampietro, 36, after they questioned his work.

The couple, who are originally from northern Spain and moved to the UK in 2016, hired Beltri — who is also Spanish — in August 2024 to work on the grade II listed building in Winchester they planned to convert into a beauty clinic. But disagreements soon arose after Beltri failed to secure permissions from the council to work on the building and cut a gas pipe, which he was not qualified to do.

The couple, who live in Southampton, queried why Beltri, who was registered as an architect in the UK in 2010, was undertaking work himself instead of hiring subcontractors such as plumbers or electricians.

The dispute escalated when Escoda-Francoli and Sampietro sacked Beltri in November 2024, and hired another architect to complete the job. They then launched legal action to recoup fees already paid to Beltri before reporting him to the Architects Registration Board (ARB).

An ARB professional conduct committee was told Beltri then left "insulting and inappropriate" voicemail messages on the couple's home phone, which resulted in them eventually having the phone disconnected.

The architect also sent 39 emails to Sampietro in a single day, in February last year, followed by another 17 emails the next day.

In an email on June 3 last year Beltri told Escoda-Francoli his wife was sleeping with two other men who he then named. In a voicemail message left in August last year, Beltri called the pair "a bunch of motherf***ers" and said: "If I saw you in the streets, I would spit in your face."

Beltri, who has moved back to Spain, later told an ARB official he was feeling suicidal over the dispute and wanted to kill someone. "I will kill them all. It's what I will do. Their parents, their family and their children," he said. The official reported Beltri's threats to police.

Beltri told the ARB tribunal: "I do not apologise for the communications because I maintain that I did not use abusive or threatening language. I do not accept the characterisation of my conduct as harassment, abuse or threats."

In his defence statement, Beltri said he accepted in hindsight that some of his communications were "inappropriate in tone and should not have been sent", apologising for "intemperate language". After giving evidence at the hearing but before he could be cross-examined, Beltri claimed the ARB had no jurisdiction given "anything he had said had been said in Spain and to another Spanish person".

The ARB rejected Beltri's submission. Its professional conduct committee found Beltri had not provided proper terms of engagement to Escoda-Francoli and Sampietro, that the renovation was not in accordance with building regulations and he had not gained proper approval from the local authorities. He was also reprimanded for using inappropriate and abusive language with his clients.

"The committee accepted that [Beltri] had shown some insight into what he had done wrong on the site but had demonstrated no understanding that all of his communications ... had been wrong or of the harm he has caused," it said. "He had not expressed any regret or remorse to any of the people involved in the case."

The ARB had no choice but to strike Beltri from its register, the committee said. "No other sanction would be sufficient to protect clients in the future and uphold and maintain public confidence in the profession of architects," it said.

CAROLINA SAMPIETRO/SOLENT NEWS

Carolina Sampietro hoped to convert a grade II listed building in Winchester, top left, into a beauty clinic but ran into problems with her first architect

Joan Beltri left rude messages on voicemail and bombarded them with emails

BRAND NEW SHOW HOME LAUNCHED

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CGI is indicative.

Snooker star denies child sex abuse

Nick Forbes

The former world snooker champion Graeme Dott asked a schoolgirl not to tell anyone he was sexually abusing her, a court has been told.

Dott, 49, who won the world championship in 2006, is accused of lewd, indecent and libidinous behaviour towards two primary school-age children.

The allegations range between 1993 and 1996 involving a girl, and from 2006 to 2010 involving a boy, both in the Glasgow region.

Dott, who was present in court and dressed in a dark suit, has denied the two charges against him.

His trial at the High Court in Glasgow started yesterday with the jury hearing from one of Dott's alleged victims, who gave evidence from behind a screen.

The woman, now in her 40s, told the court Dott had sexually abused her on multiple separate occasions while she was a child.

Asked by Lindsey Dalziel, for the prosecution, why she did not report the alleged abuse while it was happening, the witness responded: "Graeme told me not to."

She said she was told by Dott that even if she did tell anyone, they "would not believe [her] anyway".

The woman said she told a friend about the alleged abuse some years later.

"When I became a teenager and getting older, the realisation of what had really gone on between us was dawning on me and I found it really hard to cope with," the woman said.

She said even then she had initially been unable to tell anyone about the full scale of the alleged abuse, as she was "too ashamed and embarrassed to tell any of the details".

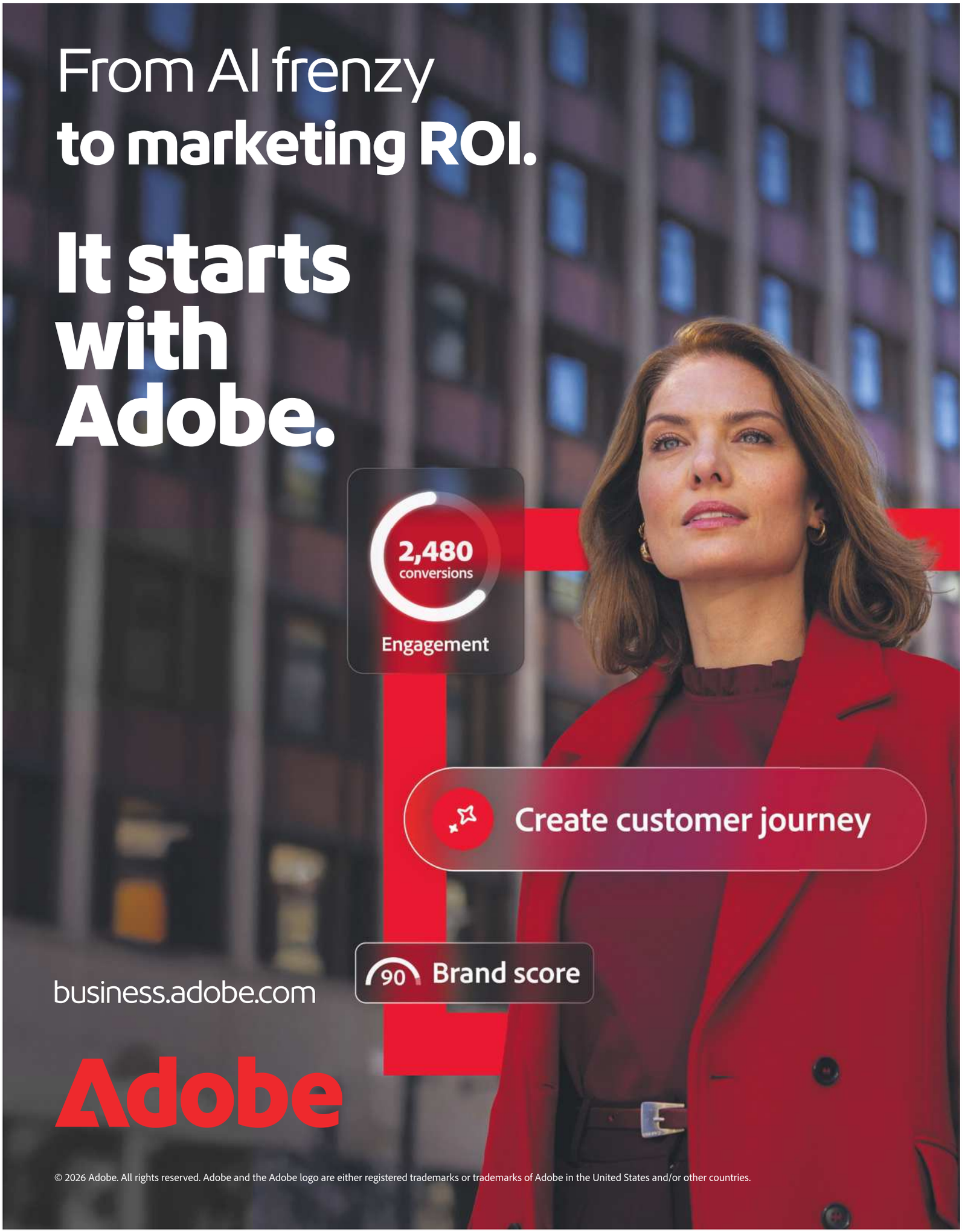
The court was also told that Dott bought her "a couple of toys" as presents, including on one occasion a teddy bear with a love heart on it.

Beginning his cross-examination of the witness, Dott's lawyer Euan Dow said to her: "Graeme Dott does not accept any of the sexual matters you have described to the ladies and gentlemen of the jury this afternoon."

Dow is due to continue his cross-examination today.

The trial, before judge Lord Harrower, continues and is expected to last up to five days.

Graeme Dott arrives at court



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News

Revealed: England's friendliest places

Mark Ludlow

The Isles of Scilly have been named England's friendliest place in a major study examining social division across Britain.

The National Conversation, a UK-wide initiative run by the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion, ranked all 296 local authority areas using government data from the community life survey.

Some of the measures include how often people chat to their neighbours, feelings of loneliness and belonging, local pride and levels of participation in civic life.

The Isle of Scilly achieved a near-perfect score on the so-called connection barometer, recording 99 out of 100, and was followed by South Hams in south Devon, then West Devon, the Derbyshire Dales and Richmond upon Thames, southwest London.

The Isle of Scilly, a group of islands about 28 miles southwest of Cornwall, has a population of 2,300 people, which may be a key factor as to why the residents are so happy.

According to the community life survey from 2024–25, only 3 per cent of Scilly residents felt lonely often or always, while almost 90 per cent said they chatted to their neighbours at least monthly and 86.5 per cent were proud to live in their local area.

The area named as the least friendly in England was the east London borough of Barking and Dagenham, where 10.1 per cent of residents said they often felt lonely, compared to a 6.6 per cent national average, and 42.8 per cent said they felt proud to live in their local area, compared with 59.7 per cent nationally.

The index is intended to encourage people to share how their experience compares with the data.

The National Conversation, jointly chaired by Sir Sajid Javid, the former Conservative home secretary, and Jon Cruddas, the former Labour policy co-ordinator, aims to improve understanding of the country's state of connection and cohesion, helping to create a shared vision for how we can live well together.

The foreword from its first report, published last year, claimed that "communal life in Britain is under threat" as a result of declining infrastructure and institutions, dwindling trust in those institutions, weaker family units, growing inequality and chronic neglect from policymakers. It identified threats that were turning social disconnection into something more dangerous, including the mismanagement of immigration, cost of living pressures and extremism driven by social media.

The commission warned that Britain was "sitting on a tinderbox of disconnection and division".

Crudas, a former MP for Dagenham, said he "nearly choked on [his] cornflakes" when the area appeared in last place on the index.

"I think government stats miss a lot of what really makes an area tick, including my old town," he told The Guardian. "But that's why we have developed it — to spark a conversation.

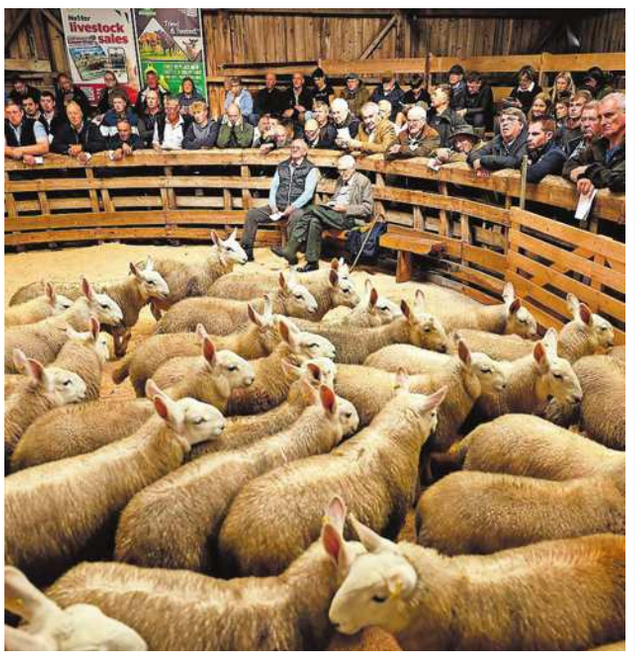
"Because what we really want is a view on your area."

Top and bottom

Warm welcome
1. Scilly Isles
2. South Hams in south Devon
3. West Devon
4. Derbyshire Dales
5. Richmond upon Thames

Cold shoulders
1. Barking and Dagenham
2. Stoke-on-Trent
3. Ashfield
4. Mansfield
5. Ipswich

Loneliness is rare among residents of St Mary's Harbour in the Scilly Isles



Herd instinct Scottish farmers in search of a woolly bargain gather yesterday at Lairg in the Highlands, which hosts one of the biggest lamb auctions in Europe

Tartan Army romance ends amid claims of chequered past

David Leask

Boston fell hard for the Tartan Army and the often drink-fuelled patter of its footsoldiers this summer. But Jill Roberts fell harder than most.

The 42-year-old singer took up with a joiner from Bonnyrigg after a chance meeting during the World Cup outside Fenway Park, home of her city's beloved Red Sox baseball team.

A video of her first encounter with Tommy Morrison, 38, lit up social media and generated headlines in the American media about the romance of the beautiful game. When she asked the Scot what he liked most about Boston, he replied with lightning speed: "You."

But their long-distance relationship has ended sooner than might have been hoped. Roberts announced on social media that she had broken up with Morrison after the Daily Record revealed he had appeared in court on unspecified serious charges.

She said in a video: "I really don't like the position I am in right now. I know many of you have said that I don't have to explain myself to anyone, which is totally true ... But I'm in this position where I went pretty public with a relationship and now things have changed. Where do things stand with me and Tommy? I've let him know that it's over for me based on some things that happened. I don't think he's a bad person. I think he's got a lot of great qualities and charisma. But, he has some unresolved connections with the past that he needs to resolve or pursue."

Roberts and Morrison became a pin-up couple for the idea that football can bring people together. Their romance during the World Cup also led to discussion about the differences between Scottish and American men. In Florida, where Scotland played a match, women were charmed by the Tartan Army. One US dating expert said the direct and uncomplicated nature of Scottish men was particularly appealing to American women. "I think they [American women] love the bold energy," Julia Radley, who runs match-making events in Boston, said. "Nowadays, men expect women to chase them but that's what's different about the Scots. They will be straightforward and say how they're feeling about you."

Roberts explained her decision to break up with Morrison to her followers online. She said: "If I have learnt anything since coming out of religious control, getting divorced and really finding myself in the last five or six years, is that life is very short ... I am walking away from this relationship with my head held high, feeling good and having clarity on it. It is what it is."

Jill Roberts, 42, met Tommy Morrison, 38, in Boston during the World Cup

Stop trying so hard: it's OK to be ordinary
Alice Thomson
Page 21

Comment

Free speech is universal or it's worth nothing

Those who want to police the press appear to like the idea of freedom of expression for themselves but not for others

Alex Massie

@ALEXMASSIE

Anyone wishing to catch the last of the summer vibes could do very much worse than keep an eye on Zack Polanski. Earlier this week the Green Party leader objected that "once again, parts of our media are failing at the most basic part of their job — reporting the truth". In this instance, the failure was to link wildfires in Britain with climate change at every opportunity.

Last Saturday, on the other hand, Polanski was busy condemning Andy Burnham's "spineless response" to the Jason Arday affair on the grounds that the prime minister fails to appreciate this is an opportunity "to tackle the press". Notwithstanding the tragedy of the Arday story — for such it is, despite it also being a saga seemingly designed for an acutely acidic satire — the accusation here is that the press spent too much time reporting the truth without ever once pausing to consider the possible consequences of doing so.

On Sunday Polanski was at it again. Responding to an opinion piece in the Daily Mail in which the author suggested a long, hot, dry summer was actually very pleasant in very many ways, Polanski reiterated that: "It's time we sorted out the press." The author of that op-ed might indeed be insouciant in the face of changing weather patterns but — bear with me here — it's not obviously something which needs "sorting out". Being wrong on the internet or even in the pages of the Daily Mail is not, or not yet, a crime.

There is a lot of this stuff about. Elsewhere, Will Self made a fine case for keeping novelists away from politics. After Arday, "Police should be impounding computers", he intoned, adding that: "This is not an attack upon a free press — it is a necessarily immediate defence of one." As defences of press freedom go, "Jail the journalists" is an unorthodox one. Arday was newsworthy because almost everything about his life and his desperate death was rare and unusual.

It feels important to stress that the underlying attitudes displayed here are not confined to novelists and left-wing politicians. Nigel Farage has spent a good portion of the summer protesting against entirely legitimate reporting of his financial affairs and those of his party. Reform's leader promises "serious consequences" and asks us to infer, I think, that his party is now open to further Leveson-style restrictions on the press. The iron-ribbed tribunes of the people can be snowflakes too.

> We should strive to be kind, but not at the expense of the truth

Then again, everyone loves free speech until a reporter is in their face or up their backside. In few other realms of public life is the gap between theory and practice so very wide. Actually, of course, what people really love is free speech for themselves but not for others. That this is a very human failing should not blind us to its dangers. Even those few countries with hitherto robust speech protections are tiring of them in this Age of Hurt Feelings. Donald Trump cannot take a punch either and many of his acolytes are even feebler. Maga is just as fond of banning books or academic courses as any po-faced left-wing scold.

Unfortunately, a well-behaved media never held anyone or anything to account. You may say that we would say that, wouldn't we, and yes, we would, but not just because this is a self-serving, even self-flattering, suggestion but also, importantly, because it is true. For better or worse, bad or even objectionable journalism is the price paid for the good stuff. There is almost no way of controlling the former that does not also impinge upon the latter.

The temper of the moment runs against liberty and liberalism, however. "It's a free country, innit?" is a phrase heard less frequently today than in the past and no one ever erred by underestimating the great British public's enthusiasm for banning things, scolding others or suppressing views with which they happen, individually, to disagree.

Bad speech is not the same as criminal speech, and disliking something, even for good reasons, is not ipso facto justification for suppressing it. This is both elementary and somehow something close to transgressive, now that social media has helped fuel an inferno of whataboutery and made reasonable disagreement so much harder.

Pluralism is unfashionable and dissent increasingly considered a sign of terminal weakness. Hence most of our political parties now suspend or expel parliamentarians or prominent supporters for the flimsiest of reasons. Criticising the leadership ought not to be grounds for disciplinary action save in the most extravagant cases. Yet it has become routine.

All the churches seem to be becoming narrower to the point where they should more accurately be deemed sects. Labour MPs have lost the whip for trivial reasons and we are to understand, I think, that former Conservative cabinet ministers are no longer considered good enough Tories to merit places on the party's list of approved candidates. The punishment beatings now cascade down to include media outriders; Tim Montgomerie, once of this parish, has been suspended from Reform for daring to criticise the dear leader. This does not seem like a sign of a healthy political and social culture.

Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader, urged the PM to "tackle the press"

A liberal democracy stands for liberalism and an open society or it ceases to merit its own label. We should strive to be kind, but not at the expense of the truth or legitimate inquiry. So while there is indeed often something sulphurous about the spectacle of Fleet Street in full cry, the only thing worse than an unchained press is a muzzled one. Some of the commentary on Arday (as distinct from the reporting) was unpleasantly vindictive and gleeful and even the press's supporters might concede that, whatever the fourth estate's effect on the enemy, it can terrify its friends too. We can recognise that without giving succour to those who will use any issue, any occasion and any excuse to hobble a free press.

> A well-behaved media never held anyone or anything to account

Of course speech can have consequences. We need only look to Batley for evidence of that. It is now five years since a teacher there was forced into hiding for the "crime" of using a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad during a lesson exploring issues of speech and blasphemy and religious disputation. The mob got its way as, shamefully, the school suspended the teacher and offered an "unequivocal" apology for something that merited no apology at all. The council, naturally, backed the school and so did the local MP. If you want to go in search of a "culture war" you can find it in Yorkshire and I do not think identifying the villains is difficult.

Blown hither and thither by these gales and menaced by left and right alike, the centre struggles to be heard. But there is nothing small or weak about a centrism which insists upon the old liberal virtues. Liberty is constrained enough and has no need of additional chains or safety rails. This is not an equivocating or modest position; in the current atmosphere it feels almost radical.

Daniel Finkelstein is away

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Comment

It is hard to see why Hamas would disarm

There are lessons from the Good Friday agreement: one is how difficult the peace process is

Roger Boyes

@ROGERBOYES

The Hamas leadership never disguised that its fighters were being trained for a massacre. "We will come to you, God willing, in a roaring flood," announced the terror chief Yahya Sinwar nine months before his marauding legion attacked and slaughtered Israelis in October 2023. Now the knottiest of Middle East problems approaches: how to persuade Hamas to abandon armed resistance, its very essence?

What political compromise would be big and juicy enough for its depleted leadership to embrace the ideological apostasy of disarming its troops? How do we trust them? They are tired, yes, but even tired soldiers can kill.

That has been at the heart of the accelerating diplomacy of the past few months. Hamas, according to leaks from President Trump's Board of Peace, has agreed to a plan that would see a decommissioning of its heavy weapons in Gaza, stepping down from governing Gaza and accepting the deployment of an international stabilisation force. The group is making it conditional on Israel halting airstrikes, removing its troops from Gaza and allowing for the reconstruction of the territory.

Everyone understands this to be a ploy. Binyamin Netanyahu is facing a tricky election on October 27 and voters, even those exhausted by the prime minister's wars, are in no mood to give ground to Hamas or erase the memory of its bloodlust.

Jared Kushner, as an adviser to his father-in-law Donald Trump, and Sir Tony Blair have been shuttling between Hamas in Egypt and the Israeli prime minister trying to square the circle. Concessions to Israel include agreement that Hamas will hand over its weapons (heavy and otherwise) to a US-led international stabilisation force rather than an Egyptian-trained Palestinian police unit. There seems to be a tacit concession that Israel can continue an assassination campaign against Hamas

> The IRA's political wing was given a say in power-sharing

operatives as long as they still hang on to their weapons. Reconstruction would begin in earnest only after complete Hamas disarmament.

Kushner and Blair, however well briefed, do not add up to a Henry Kissinger. But they bring to the table the ghost of the Good Friday agreement which set out some useful guidelines for how a terrorist organisation can be disarmed. The US was the heavyweight guarantor of the 1998 deal. Bill Clinton had big leverage — he could offer some diplomatic legitimacy to the Irish republicans, just as Hamas is quietly thrilled that Trump has sent Kushner to bless the current talks. And the US could always threaten total isolation and a ban on Hamas funding, just as it did with the IRA, should it not fall into line.

But it is Blair's understanding of the processing of a disarmament agreement that has given him his authority in the Hamas talks. In his day, the Provisional IRA refused to surrender weapons, so arms were rendered unusable through a phased system of gun-collection and decommissioning. Something similar could work in Gaza, but Israeli intelligence will be essential to identify hidden weapons caches and underground arms workshops. That just wouldn't work without Israelis on the ground.

The decommissioning of the IRA in Northern Ireland took about seven years, under strict international supervision. Does Gaza have seven years? Is there a realistic plan for sealing the remaining tunnels? And then there's the question of incentivising co-operation. The IRA was disarmed because its political wing, Sinn Fein, was given a say in power-sharing governance. Hamas, by contrast, faces total exclusion from the future administration of Gaza. Or does it? The enthusiasm of Hamas politburo leader Khalil al-Hayya for meeting Kushner-Blair was remarkable, considering that he has lost four sons, three grandchildren and a wife in Israeli hits over the years. What he presumably sniffs is the prospect of a diplomatic upgrade. Don't give it to him.

While US leadership enabled the Northern Ireland deal, the patrons of Hamas have no single strategic vision. Qatar gives Hamas leaders a place of exile, Turkey has financial enablers but they see themselves as mediators in Gaza, not as a security shield. Iran still sees Hamas as a forward asset, capable of deflecting or undermining Israel. But these are not the kind of friends that give the leverage that a terror group in the throes of reinvention necessarily craves.

Patience is at the heart of a disarmament process, as Colombia discovered in 2017 when it collected over 7,000 weapons from the Farc guerrilla group. Disbanded, gunless gunmen were sent to demobilisation zones — but the state did not provide the roads, policing, schools and court system needed to reintegrate them. The result was that many Farcistas joined drug cartels, illegal gold-mining groups or signed up as mercenaries. Something similar will happen to Hamas graduates after their guns are scrapped unless a path is found to build a non-violent future in Gaza.

Gaza is something of a failed statelet, dependent perhaps on a massive reconstruction budget that only a country like Saudi Arabia could offer. But big investments in infrastructure need big security. And the starting point has to be to neuter the terror group that tried and flopped so miserably as a government. Hamas once had religious pretensions but the only future it could offer was one of martyrdom. Gazans want more; in their dreams they want to build. Stripped of its guns and its corrupt networks, Hamas is nothing: not a builder, not a protector, not a competent administrator. That's why it will resist any genuine attempt at disarmament. Without guns, it is nothing.

Matthew Parris Notebook

Like confetti at a wedding, butterflies filled the air

Let me spare you a "What I did on my holidays" diary; but, after a swing from the equator in Kenya down through wonderful, under-visited Zimbabwe to Cape Town in South Africa, there are memories that bear recounting. Oddly enough, one of these is the preponderance of butterflies.

We do, of course, have butterflies in Britain, and some pretty ones, but I was not prepared to meet butterflies in — almost literally — clouds. In the forest in the Matthews mountains in northern Kenya (in my last notebook I described an encounter there with mating elephants) we found a deep pool in the river a few miles from our camp.

Everywhere we had walked we'd seen orange, red, white and yellow butterflies fluttering from our path. But as I sat on a rock overlooking our secret pool, there arose from the opposite bank something that more resembled the confetti moment after a wedding than anything in nature that I had seen before. Literally thousands of white butterflies had taken wing, and seemed to fill the air with their silent, flickering beauty. I felt almost like an intruder into a different world.

I was aching to go

Later at that same camp, my (younger) partner joined others in our party for a hike up and over the nearest ridge. I so wanted to go. But, a few days from my 77th birthday, with a knee that hurts and balance that doesn't help with picking over rocks, I knew I'd slow them all down, limping along and pretending I was fine. So I stayed behind until, many hours later, they returned, triumphant at all they'd seen.

Though I've always been up for things, I'm learning. It had been right to decline, but it was a sad and poignant moment for me. There are rites of passage in every life and they're not all in an onward direction.

Flying lesson

Driving with friends across Africa in my twenties it was our practice in wild places to camp overnight at Christian mission stations. At sundown one day in the Congo we identified such a mission, and I stopped to wind down the window and ask directions from a smartly dressed black African man by the road. Summoning my best school French, I asked "*Où est le missionnaire, s'il vous plaît?*" He gave me a sharp glance. Then, gently, replied: "*Que voulez-vous comme missionnaire?*" He was the missionary. I could only stammer my apologies.

So it was with a rueful smile that, in Zimbabwe, I heard this true and recent story. One morning, an American tourist, impressed with the professionalism of the white pilot on her chartered light aircraft the previous day, was introduced to the black woman who would pilot her next. "I hope you're as good a pilot as that young man yesterday," said the tourist. Another sharp glance. "So do I. I trained him."

More memorials

The Rhodes Memorial outside Cape Town is a sad place, both contested and neglected. Cecil John Rhodes was arguably a great man. But he was also a cheat. Wherever there are memorials to him, people campaign to remove them. I have a better idea. Rhodes effectively destroyed the Matabele chief Lobengula, another great figure in his way, by tricking him out of all his vast tribal lands. The chief died in ignominy. Let's have statues and memorials to Lobengula: in Cape Town, Oriel College in Oxford — wherever his nemesis is memorialised too. Lobengula, describing how by stealth a chameleon catches a fly, said "England is that chameleon. I am that fly."

A novel idea?

Back to England, and politics. I'm reading Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister*. He surely anticipated the advent of Kemi Badenoch, who, you may recall, now requires any would-be Tory parliamentary candidate to declare that Britain must leave the European Convention on Human Rights and abandon the present path to carbon net zero. Trollope puts it like this:

"Had some inscrutable decree of fate ordained ... with a certainty not to be disturbed, that no candidate could be returned to parliament who would not assert the Earth to be triangular, there would rise immediately a clamorous assertion of triangularity among political aspirants.The test would be innocent. Candidates have swallowed, and daily do swallow, many a worse one."

THUNDERER

Don't waste money on school fees, the state sector's great

Stephen Petty

A games teacher at a state comprehensive school took his under-14s to play cricket against a well-known independent school nearby. A beaming head of sport strode out from the pavilion to greet him. "Hello, I'm Matt Phillips, son of Billy." (No real names here, but "Billy" was a famous England player from yesteryear.)

The PE teacher replied "Hello, and I'm Tom Chambers, son of the painter, Arthur." "Oh yes? Do I know any of his work?" "Well, he painted the railings on the seafront at Weymouth if you've ever been down that way?"

The scores in the game revealed an even greater class divide, the state school all out for 14. This kind of mismatch can happen. Though the gap created by extra facilities and coaching is bridgeable. In fact, most gaps between state and private are bridgeable. Local clubs, theatre groups, music schools, art classes and so on offer children plenty of opportunity to make up for those differences in school resources. Said PE teacher would rightly point out that some of his other school sides — when enough of them joined local sports clubs too — have prevailed over that same private school.

Similarly, a look at this week's GCSE results may give some the impression that independent schools "do better". But those results and league tables are always deceptive. Research conducted by University College London has illustrated that, when schools' selection policies and socio-economic differences are stripped away, state-sector children perform slightly better than their private sector counterparts in the core GCSE subjects. And the truth is that there are many wonderful and inspiring teachers in both sectors, but that there is a higher proportion of unqualified teachers in private schools.

As a parent of two and after teaching generations of other children in the comprehensive sector I have seen repeatedly how the level of parent and child enterprise and commitment is far more crucial to success and fulfilment than the type of school attended. A state school often cannot offer the same level of resources, but what matters is a willingness at home to make the most of its strengths while also seeking out additional coaching and creative opportunities locally.

Yes, in some deprived areas, those local extras are often lacking, nor are they an affordable option for every parent. But for most of those now leaving or considering leaving the expensive fee-paying sector state schools, I would argue, are a more desirable alternative. The costs to offer children those out-of-school extras will be minuscule in comparison, and the huge savings on school fees will help to finance countless additional, memorable family life experiences.

Stephen Petty is a writer and former secondary teacher

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Stop trying so hard: it's OK to be ordinary

Japanese philosopher suggests that our quest for perfection in everything leaves most of us disappointed and distressed

Alice Thomson

@ALICETTIMES

Ordinary has become an insult in the 21st century. No one aspires to be average, that sounds mediocre and dull; they want to excel. Everyone now dreams of being extraordinary, talented, gifted, different, unique in their own way. It's all about "main character energy", as Gen Z calls it. Nothing less, we have become convinced, will make us feel contented and fulfilled.

We need to max our lives in every way, push ourselves to the limit, perfect our daily routines and sleep schedules, curate our existence and compete to win. Otherwise we believe we have failed and haven't lived up to our potential. It's all about reaching goals, standing out, being the most accomplished and polished person in the room, admired and lauded by our peers.

To do this without attracting too much envy, we increasingly have to create a backstory of overcoming adversity in our struggle to achieve. The most successful now feel the need to make it clear that their path was rocky to garner sympathy. Their success can't be due to luck or others will feel they haven't sweated their way to the top. It's all about the climb: the disadvantaged childhood, the disabilities, the failures along the way.

Celebrities and politicians often make it clear in interviews that they should be admired for scrambling to the summit against the odds, for their bravery in continuing despite a disability, illness or impoverished beginnings. Even the prime minister, who had a very normal upbringing, has felt the need to exclaim how hard it was arriving at Cambridge University in the 1980s as a northerner.

> Looks need to be maxed, lips plumped; steps must be counted

But perhaps we've got it all wrong. A new book by the bestselling Japanese philosopher and psychologist Ichiro Kishimi, *The Courage To Be Ordinary*, wonders whether our quest for perfection, creating the ideal origin story and striving to be a superior human being, as Nietzsche suggested, is instead leaving most of us disappointed and distressed.

It is not producing a planet of self-assured, high-achieving individuals who won't tolerate second best, but leaving the majority feeling exhausted, inadequate and unfulfilled.

Looks need to be maxed, jaws snatched, lips plumped; steps have to be counted, vitamin pills popped. Good enough won't do any more when Hinge is bombarding the young with images of perfect physiques, Instagram feeds are filled with laughing families and gorgeous holiday snaps, and LinkedIn highlights those who feel "humbled" by their next promotion.

Mothers and fathers feel the need to be exceptional parents, attentive and nurturing at all times; teachers must praise their pupils, giving them the leads in the school assembly, places on teams and singling them out for greatness; children, meanwhile, have to ace their grades.

Even breakfast is an event now, a treasure hunt to find the ultimate pastry and the perfect ground coffee bean for the young. But this obsession with outdoing each other, Kishimi explains, is ultimately counterproductive.

Aspiring to be special creates tension. Children shouldn't need to prove their worth by pitting themselves against their peers; they should use their school years to experiment and discover their interests and talents in their own time, whether in the classroom, playing an instrument or messing about with a ball. They shouldn't judge their abilities only against others or worry that they need to become noteworthy. No wonder this generation is so anxious. Too many now freeze and give up, joining the ranks of Neets.

Adults meanwhile rank everything from hotels to films, books, albums, air fryers and shower heads — nothing is too trivial to be compared. The pressure is on to pick only the best each time if you can afford it; if you can't you are left feeling fobbed off. It's hard not to feel resentful about your one-star substitute.

> No wonder young people are so anxious. Too many give up

Attributes such as thoughtfulness, empathy and kindness aren't rated, it's all about perfecting home, career, hobbies and health. Yet the more they strive to be exceptional and stand out from the crowd, the more these people appear conformist.

It's not only Kishimi who is warning against perfectionism. Avram Alpert, in his 2022 book *The Good-Enough Life*, suggested that this constant competition to outdo each other drives over-consumption and prevents us from appreciating what we have already. Northern Europeans are perplexed by this obsession with winners and losers. Norwegians value being fine or as good as their neighbour.

The Danes have a word for it, *Janteloven* (the law of Jante), a social code that discourages boasting and promotes cohesive effort. It's not about slacking off, giving up or dumbing down, but enjoying the process rather than agonising over individual results.

If everything is a competition, almost everyone is disappointed. When running, it should be enough for the majority to cross the finish line of their local Parkrun or occasional half marathon and celebrate with a drink, yet now celebrities feel the need to complete several ultra events, preferably in the desert or up a mountain, and boast about the results.

Enough now. Liberate yourself from the relentless pursuit to stand out, says the 70-year-old Kishimi. This constant striving for perfection, comparing yourself to others and looking for external validation is more likely to make you unhappy.

Stop worrying about success; real confidence keeps its silence. Have the courage not to care whether you appear ordinary. This isn't failure, it's freedom.

Letters to the Editor

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‘Optics’ of drilling

Sir, You report that the government is concerned about the “optics” of approving two North Sea oil and gas projects during a summer of heatwaves and wildfires. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the drought-stricken summer of 1976. Fortunately, the government of the day did not allow the weather to determine energy policy. In the years that followed, Britain developed dozens of North Sea fields, including Claymore, Thistle, Dunlin, Heather, Ninian, Cormorant and Magnus. The resulting production transformed our energy security and generated billions of pounds for the Exchequer, helping to finance the welfare state and defence during the latter years of the Cold War.

Climate science has advanced greatly since 1976, but one principle should surely remain: decisions involving billions of pounds of investment, thousands of jobs and Britain’s future energy security should be made on evidence and the national interest, not on the “optics” of the weather on the day they are announced.

Ronald Lansdell
St Helier, Jersey

Sir, A barrel of oil not produced from the Rosebank Field or cubic foot of gas not produced from the Jackdaw Field is, quite simply, a volume of oil and gas that will have to be produced elsewhere in the world at, on average, twice the carbon intensity of UK-sourced production, and imported, with the consequent effect that that has on UK jobs and the UK economy.

Meaningful reduction in global fossil fuel consumption can be achieved only through innovative policies, the accelerated development and adoption of clean energy technologies and far greater international collaboration, rather than through any attempt to constrain international fossil fuel supply. For all practical purposes, global technical reserves of oil and gas are unlimited.

Bill Guest
Energy consultant, Horsmonden, Kent

Chess is good move

Sir, Of all the benefits of playing chess mentioned in your leading article (“Grandmasters”, Aug 17), perhaps the most important is that it is an excellent way to teach children how to win and lose gracefully. A skill much under-appreciated in all aspects of modern life.

Terance Hart
Cambridge

Corrections and clarifications

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Scholarly freedom and the Arday affair

Sir, Pratinav Anil makes a strong case for allowing universities the freedom to be weird (“Keep universities weird: it’s what they’re for”, Aug 18). He fortifies his argument with many examples of such perceived weirdness that have led to great advances in knowledge. But all relate to his arts and humanities background. Science and its protagonists can appear just as weird to the world beyond the colonnades of academe. Take the pertinent statement made by Sir Bernard Lovell, who founded Jodrell Bank, now deemed by the government to have served its purpose. Lovell said in his autobiography when talking about the research conducted with his now eponymous telescope: “The research came about through a complex of accidents and false trails — a salutary warning to those who believe it is possible to decide around a committee table what research should be financed.”

Dr Brian Austin
West Kirby, Wirral

Sir, Pratinav Anil echoes Mary Beard in claiming that “much of Oxbridge” used to be geared to promoting the interests of (I paraphrase) thick public school boys. I was at Cambridge for six years in the 1970s — at the same time and studying the same subject as Professor Beard. I was a working-class free-school-meals grammar school boy. My director of studies, John Killen, and my doctoral supervisor, Ted Kenney, both fine and rigorous scholars, would have exploded at the idea that they or any of their colleagues were in the business of staffing a finishing school for the rich or any other privileged group. The same applied as far as I could judge in every other faculty. It is an insult to suppose otherwise.

Sir John Jenkins
Matfield, Kent

Sir, The comment piece on the Jason Arday case by Sarah Ditum seemed to me a very carefully crafted and balanced piece (“I feel sorry for Jason Arday. But I don’t regret writing about him”, Aug 18). But it will probably not resolve the issues associated with the case because it is by a journalist, and one who was closely associated with the media investigation into Arday’s academic and autobiographical authenticity. Equally, now that the chancellor of Cambridge University, Lord Smith of Finsbury, has decided, and stated publicly, that Arday was the victim of a racist witch-hunt, how could any internal university investigation find otherwise? Some form of public inquiry is now surely the only option.

The Very Rev Dr John Davies
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, matriculated 1980; Christchurch, Glos

Sir, Sarah Ditum’s article, written only days after Professor Arday’s body was found and suggesting “revenge” and “control” as motivations for suicide, seems to me distasteful in the extreme. I would suggest that the short answer to the question of whether too much was written about him is “yes”, and that he should now be allowed to rest in peace.

Dr Jenny Drife
Consultant psychiatrist, London SE11

Sir, I agree with Sarah Ditum that the extensive and largely justified coverage of Jason Arday was about far more than his PhD plagiarism. In particular, it was about academic standards, since once these drop not only does this devalue particular works but the reputation of a whole university is seriously damaged.

AG Gordon
London SE5

Cohabitation rights

Sir, Melanie Phillips rightly questions whether there is a definition of cohabitation (“If you want marriage rights, get married”, Aug 18). The recent Scottish court judgment in HW v MC [2026] SC FOR 28 provides the answer in 32 pages. In determining the date on which the cohabitation ended, the judge heard evidence about whether the parties slept in the same bed, whether they shared a hotel room and had holidays together, when they had sexual relations, whether they cuddled and held hands, whether they ate together and went out for meals, whether one cooked and carried out household tasks for the other, whether they played sport together, shared Christmas Day, attended church, parties and theatre together, and who paid for what. I doubt couples would want this expensive intrusion into their lives and whether it would be the right way for judges to spend their time.

Baroness Deech
House of Lords

Sir, Andy Burnham has expressed opposition to “subscription traps” where the unwary can find they have signed up to a streaming service. However, the government is proposing a “marriage trap” where the unwary can find they have become liable for all the obligations of marriage.

Margaret Stratton
Hatfield, Herts

Medical advice

Sir, Dr Mark Porter rightly highlights the time pressures on both GPs and consultants to deal with advice and guidance (A&G) requests (“You’re familiar with A&E, but do you know the importance of A&G to your medical treatment?”, Times2, Aug 18). This system can deal efficiently with conditions such as skin diseases but only if adequate job planning sessions are available to do the work in the first place — something most health organisations are struggling with — and crucially can only work to benefit patients if they can be seen urgently or in a timely fashion, when needed, after the initial advice. There must be adequate face-to-face capacity in secondary care to cope with the patients who need to be seen.

Professor Mabs Chowdhury
Consultant dermatologist, Cardiff

Mordaunt’s return

Sir, The voters of Portsmouth North did the country a great disservice when they failed to re-elect Penny Mordant (“Mordaunt among Tory ex-MPs in reselection limbo”, Aug 17). She is a politician of considerable worth. If the Conservatives fail to place her on their candidates’ list I shall resign from the party.

Philip Whalley
Corsham, Wilts

Upstairs, downstairs

Sir, Unless you fall down them there is a greater benefit of stairs in descending rather than ascending (letters, Aug 15 & 17). Muscle physiology creates greater strength in eccentric work (ie stretching muscle while contracting) and produces more quadriceps strength, which in turn helps prevent falling. Multistorey buildings should have one-way elevators (up only) and stairs for down only. More importantly, without stairs we would now be ruled by the Daleks.

Dr Andrew Cairns
Ret’d GP, Petersfield, Hants

FINE BATTING ENDS ASHES DROUGHT

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 19, 1926

England, 280 and 436; Australia, 302 and 125. At last England’s chosen XI has put an end to the depressingly long series of defeats and disappointments in the Test Matches with Australia. Proof that there is life in the old lion yet was long overdue. Not since 1912 have the honours of the rubber fallen to this country.

From first to last it was a great match. The general feeling in England, as the news of the last day’s play was flashed from the Oval to the ends of the Empire, was that it was almost too good to be true. When play began in the morning the stand made by the last English batsmen put the Oval crowd in a state of high good humour. But at the close of the third innings, when the Australians were left with the formidable total of 415 runs to make to win, there were few who ventured to prophesy with any confidence that the task would be beyond their powers. Mr Collins and his team, like other Australian sides before them, have shown themselves such fine fighters, as well as such first-class cricketers, that thousands of people were prepared to believe they might accomplish the seemingly impossible.

The Oval is traditionally a fortunate ground for English sides, and by the luck of the toss the second innings of the Australians, and the fourth of the match, had to be played on a wicket that had been badly worn during the first three days and was certainly not improved by the rain and sun of the previous day. But, even so, the rapid fall of their wickets in the last stage of the match came as an almost bewildering surprise, so much so that when the game was over the first wave of natural exultation was quickly followed by a feeling of genuine sympathy with the losers. The most patriotic of Englishmen were inclined to think that the luck of the game had gone against them.

Of this aspect Mr Collins, in congratulating the English captain and his team, made no mention. He paid them the tribute of saying that the Australians were “tremendously impressed” by the spirit in which England fought the game.

Interviewed after most of the excitement had died down, Mr APF Chapman, the captain of England, said that he was the proudest and happiest man in England to-day.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Regulating cyclists

Sir, In your leading article “Rogue Cyclists” (Aug 17) you describe the use of heavy, fast, powered electric motorbikes as “cycling”. It is not. These machines are motor vehicles, puzzlingly exempt from the sensible rules imposed on all motor transport for 90 years. Their users need not pass a test and are not compelled to insure themselves, and their vehicles do not carry numberplates. This is exactly why they are so popular. Many of their users ignore the law without any real fear of being caught or punished. They are also a menace to real cyclists, whose cycle lanes, won after years of campaigning, have now been invaded by powered machines they were never meant for. It is true that many pushbike riders also break the law, and I do not defend that. But this is a different issue. Trying to register pedal bikes, as you suggest, is impracticable — only North Korea has successfully done so.

Were we to treat e-bikes and e-scooters as the motor vehicles they actually are, incidentally banning them from cycle paths, we would greatly reduce the danger they pose.

Peter Hitchens
London W8

Historic housing

Sir, Neil Mendoza is right to draw attention to the value of historic buildings in promoting a sense of community (Thunderer, Aug 17; letter, Aug 18). The Ultimate Picture Palace, a community-owned cinema established in Oxford more than 100 years ago, is threatened by the refusal of its landlord, Oriel College, to extend its lease. As provost of Oriel College, maybe Lord Mendoza could have a word.

Priscilla Goldby
Oxford

Sir, Neil Mendoza makes an excellent case for historic buildings contributing to the housing crisis. I wonder how many flats could be created within Buckingham Palace (letter, Aug 18) and other similar and pretty pointless vast edifices throughout the country?

Philly Morrall
Cilgwyn, Pembrokeshire

Fine-tuned love

Sir, It was not so much shared musical tastes that convinced me that my wife was the one for me; rather it was the discovery, made shortly after our meeting, that she could tell a Fender Telecaster from a Gibson Les Paul, by ear (“Food of Love”, leading article, Aug 18). No further deliberation was required.

Adrian Mallen
East Boldon, Tyne & Wear

Fear of farms

Sir, As an eight-year-old, I remember being herded into our school hall to watch *Apaches*, a public information film released in 1977 about the dangers of the average farm (“Help me, please, to educate these numbskulls”, Aug 15; letter, Aug 18).

I couldn’t get it out of my head for a very long time and am still wary of farm machinery, despite not living particularly near a farm.

Jane Corbett
Birmingham

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime phone number.

Daily Universal Register

UK: Producer price inflation figures to be released; first day of the England v Pakistan Test series, at Headingley.

Nature notes

The sun grew yet hotter; the earth yet drier. Some trees began to visibly flag; sycamore, hazel, birch and lime dropped their leaves in a survival tactic. And yet nature was still capable of clinging to life in the arid North Yorkshire village of Bagby. Since the parish's fortnightly visit from the tractor mower had ceased, the scrap of ground at the top of Church Lane has become a multi-coloured delight. The fibrous tentacles of chicory held blue flowers, while patches of hawkweed, shivering in the hot wind, were yellow. But the main note in the floral collage was yarrow, whose argent flowers glinted in the sun like a haul of newly discovered silver bullion. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Bill Clinton, *pictured*, US president (1993-2001), 80; **Simon Bird**, actor, *The Inbetweeners* (2008), 42; **Jennie Bond**, journalist, BBC royal correspondent (1989-2003), 76; **Jim Carter**, actor, *Brassed Off* (1996), 78; **Jonathan Coe**, writer, *Middle England* (2018), 65; **John Deacon**, bassist, Queen (1971-97), *Another One Bites the Dust* (1980), 75; **Laura Deas**, skeleton racer, Olympic bronze medallist (2018), 38; **Lord (Edward) Faulks KC**, chairman, Independent Press Standards Organisation (2020-Apr 2026), 76; **Mary Joe Fernández**, tennis player, two-time Olympic gold medallist (1992, 1996), 55; **Rebecca Gallantree**, diver, gold medallist, Commonwealth Games (2014), 42; **Ian Gillan**, rock musician, Deep Purple, *Smoke on the Water* (1972), 81; **Richard Ingrams**, editor, Private Eye (1963-86) and The Oldie (1992-2014), 89; **Billy J Kramer**, pop singer, *Bad to Me* (1964), 83; **Pablo Larraín**, film-maker, *Jackie* (2016), 50; **Mette-Marit, Crown Princess of Norway**, 53; **Satya Nadella**, chairman and chief executive, Microsoft, 59; **Debra Paget**, actress, *The Ten Commandments* (1956), 93; **Jack Rankin**, Conservative MP for Windsor, 34; **Renée Richards**, ophthalmologist and former tennis player best known for seeking to compete as a woman in the 1976 US Open after gender reassignment surgery, 92; **Baroness (Patricia) Scotland of Asthal KC**, Commonwealth secretary-general (2016-25), attorney general (2007-10), 71; **Jill St John**, actress, *Diamonds are Forever* (1971), 86; **Joey Tempest**, singer-songwriter, Europe, *The Final Countdown* (1986), 63; **Sir Christian Turner**, UK ambassador to the US, 54; **Luis von Ahn**, co-founder and chief executive, Duolingo (language app), 48; **Clare Waight Keller**, global creative director of Uniqlo, designer of the Duchess of Sussex's wedding dress, 56; **Charles Wellesley, Duke of Wellington**, Conservative MEP (1979-89), 81; **Lee Ann Womack**, country music singer, *I Hope You Dance* (2000), 60.

On this day

In **1960** the USSR launched the Sputnik 5 spacecraft into orbit around Earth, carrying two dogs, named Belka (Squirrel) and Strelka (Little Arrow), along with mice, rats and plants. They returned safely.

The last word

"Mankind's true moral test ... consists of its attitudes towards those who are at its mercy: animals." Milan Kundera, Czech novelist, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984)

Drill, Andy, Drill

Andy Burnham should ignore the naysayers and approve gas and oil production in the Jackdaw and Rosebank fields while sanctioning fresh exploration in UK waters

It will soon be half a year since the flow of liquefied natural gas, crude oil and refined petrochemical products passing through the Strait of Hormuz was brought to a standstill by war. Coming in the wake of the gas price rise caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the on-off conflict between the United States and Iran that continues to impede seaborne trade in the Gulf serves as the latest reminder of the extreme delicacy of the world's energy system.

The United Kingdom, with its huge reliance on natural gas for electricity generation and home heating, is among the most vulnerable of the big economies to disruption. Correspondingly, any development that can ensure greater security of supply should be considered a national priority. That should include increasing domestic gas and oil production when and where possible.

No amount of lobbying against fossil fuels changes the fact that Britain will rely on gas generation for decades to come. The question is not about the status of gas in the nation's energy mix but its origin. Logic dictates that as much gas and oil as possible should come from domestic offshore reserves. Running down production and exploration in the North Sea and adjoining waters merely to substitute it with expensive and more carbon-intensive imports is green virtue signalling at its most idiotic. Unlike wind and solar, which are vulnerable to the vagaries of the weather, gas generation can be ramped up swiftly at any time. Nuclear generation can also provide this essential form of "dispatchable" power but neglect of that sector has ensured the country will lack the necessary fleet of big and small reactors to supply it for years to come. Until the nuclear fleet is recapitalised gas will remain the UK's vital backstop.

It must be hoped therefore that Andy Burnham will see sense and allow production from the Jackdaw and Rosebank gas and oil fields to begin immediately. These two fields, the former off Aberdeen and the latter off Shetland, cost billions to develop but were put on ice after a legal challenge. Now that public consultations on both have been completed, the prime minister should waste no time in turning the taps on.

No 10 is said to be nervous about granting consent during a summer marked by heatwaves and drought, fearing it will incense the climate change lobby. So be it. The obsession with forcing net zero on to Britain's businesses and households at an unsustainable pace simply to establish this country as a moral beacon has resulted in some of the highest energy costs in the world. British industry's competitiveness has been undermined and household budgets hit by a strategy that goes largely unnoticed in the outside world. The UK emits 1 per cent of global greenhouse gases and the big polluters — China, the US and India — pay zero attention to our net zero agonising. Save, that is, for President Trump who, for all his missteps, is right to point out that Britain risks squandering assets on its continental shelf. Offshore Energies UK, an industry body, says recoverable gas deposits may be twice the official estimate. Yet Mr Burnham is so far sticking by Labour's ridiculous manifesto pledge to ban new oil and gas exploration.

Human-induced climate change is real and developing renewable and zero-emission energy sources should be a priority, but as part of a more nuanced strategy. The Conservatives recognise this and are backing a report from the think tank Onward that places greater emphasis on nuclear and gas while winding down subsidies for wind and solar. It estimates that reduced network costs, subsidies and charges would save £320 billion between 2030 and 2050.

In a more uncertain world, this country must establish energy security. That means a robust mix of renewables, nuclear and offshore. Pragmatism should take the place of zealotry and ideology.

Pay Attention

Higher public sector wages threaten the nation's finances and raise the cost of living

It's obvious to anybody who has paid attention to the condition of the public finances that the state needs to tighten its belt, but the latest pay data show that's not happening. Public sector pay rose at an annual rate of 6.2 per cent in the second quarter of the year, while private sector pay rose at 3.7 per cent. Given that inflation is at 2.6 per cent, public sector wages are rising three times as fast, in real terms, as those in the outside world.

In normal times, this would not be of great concern. The relationship between public and private sector pay changes over time: when the labour market is tight and workers have more bargaining power, as has been the case for most of the past five years, private-sector workers tend to do better. When it slackens, as is happening now, workers in the public sector, which is more heavily unionised, tend to do better.

Now, unfortunately, rising real wages in the public sector are combined with two unhealthy trends. One is the rise in the number of public sector workers. Over the past ten years, they have grown from 5.4 million to 6.2 million, with the biggest increases in the NHS and the civil service.

That has happened partly because the health service is growing as the population gets older, and because Brexit has created new jobs. But it's also because bureaucracies tend to grow unless there is a conspicuous effort to curtail their growth. Bosses who try to cut numbers are rarely loved: the sacking by Sir Keir Starmer of Sir Olly Robbins, the former permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, was less unpopular than it might have been in the civil service because he had been trying to reduce the department's headcount.

The other worrying trend is the decline in public-service productivity. During the pandemic productivity crashed throughout the economy as people were banned from their offices, health workers couldn't get to hospitals and courts were closed. Since then, private-sector productivity has rebounded but public sector productivity has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The reasons are not clear, though the persistence of fully remote working in parts of the public sector may play a role. The result, though, is obvious: taxpayers are paying more for services and getting less.

Higher pay, a bigger workforce and lower productivity are particularly worrying when the government is heavily in debt and there are new pressures on the public purse. Demography is raising the costs of health care, Russian aggression is increasing the cost of defence and climate change means the country is having to future-proof its infrastructure.

Rising public sector pay does not only mean a higher wage bill for the government. It also pushes up wage rates in the rest of the economy, and thus keeps inflation high. That will force the Bank of England to keep interest rates higher than would otherwise be the case, meaning higher prices for consumers.

As a left-of-centre prime minister, Andy Burnham will no doubt be heartened that public sector workers are enjoying real wage increases. But he should take no comfort from the data. Those increases threaten his mission to stop the cost of living rising for ordinary people, and also risk further undermining the already rickety public finances. If he is to stop inflation spiralling, and prevent Britain from tipping into a full-blown fiscal crisis, he must bear down on public sector pay.

As the saying goes...

Even the natives have little idea how to pronounce many English words

In a smooth segue from acai to croissants — omitting his usual charcuterie — Lord Cholmondeley gave his breakfast order with insouciance. He may have been amused to find that few people would have been able to describe the incident, let alone the contretemps Lord Beauchamp had with a colonel in Worcestershire. For to most Britons, these words are bafflingly unpronounceable.

Most will try, however. A survey by the Czech car company Škoda (itself a victim of the missing H in its name) shows that 85 per cent believe correct pronunciation is important, if only to aid comprehension, with Gen Z more likely to smugly correct a boomer than their elders, who appear strangely more relaxed to speak and let speak. Of course allowances must be made for Americans. How are they to know what the Brits make of Worcester, Gloucester and Leicester? Or those idiosyncratic aristocrats who claim their names came over with the Conquest? Americans, however, are unashamedly keener on the opening syllable than the British: the address of a research laboratory, for example. And what are those on either side of the pond to make of "advertisement"?

Whole dictionaries have been compiled of the sentences that leave one side or the other puzzled: the MP who tabled a motion which the US senator understood had been abandoned or the British passenger terrified when the American pilot announced that the plane would be in the air momentarily. But words of foreign origin, creeping in at ever faster pace, often leave everyone perplexed, though the US copes better with Spanish/Mexican slang. We've long been used to caffay and garridge. And crowkay has joined the list of understandable but unspellable words. But pity the rest of the world that now has to learn English. How can they make the vocal distinction between fool, fail, fill, feel, furl, foil, file, fowl, fall, fell and full?

World

Tehran's divided regime is blocking all paths to peace

Iran's president wants a deal but the supreme leader and hardliners seek vengeance on US, writes **Samer Al-Atrush**

On a gloomy July night in Tehran, Masoud Pezeshkian, the Iranian president, found himself escorted into the back seat of a car with blacked-out windows, and seated next to a man whose face was obscured by the dark. Pezeshkian was instructed to keep the conversation short and not to touch the passenger.

For weeks, Pezeshkian had demanded to meet Mojtaba Khamenei, the son and successor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike on February 28. The attack had left the new leader disfigured, and the Iranians believe that Israel tried to kill him in subsequent airstrikes — once in hospital and again in an ambulance. He has since gone deep underground, issuing only the occasional written statement.

Pezeshkian had threatened to resign if he was not allowed to meet the supreme leader. He wanted clarity and support from him amid splits in the regime over the ceasefire they had signed with America in June. Hardliners in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were pushing for a resumption of military action against what they regarded as a strategically weakened adversary. Pezeshkian wanted peace. Governing Iran before the war had been hard enough; decades of sanctions gutted the economy and sparked regular protests. A return to hostilities would make it even harder.

President Pezeshkian thinks Iran can negotiate from a position of strength

But when he emerged from the car after the brief encounter, he questioned whether the taciturn figure sitting next to him in the shadows was Mojtaba, said one source familiar with the meeting. He demanded another meeting and this time was granted an audience that, he later said, lasted seven hours.

"I discussed with him all of the country's issues, including people's livelihoods, the state of the market, employment, housing, sanctions, how we stand firm, the people's support, unity and cohesion," said the president.

The length and substance of the second meeting may have been considerable but it failed to resolve disputes within the regime. The divisions have since spilt into the open, with Iranian negotiators confiding to mediators that they are powerless to agree to a new peace deal because hardliners in Tehran refuse to budge. The IRGC insists on the right to charge tolls in the Strait of Hormuz, to regain billions of dollars in frozen assets and retain Iran's nuclear programme.

This month President Trump suggested that a deal between Iran and neighbouring Oman to manage the strait would be reached within days, leading to a broader ceasefire in place of the failed June agreement.

The US president based his prediction on what Gulf mediators and his own envoys had told him. Iranian negotiators agreed to the new deal, citing just one "technical issue" they needed to discuss with Tehran. Statements announcing the deal were drafted. And then the Iranian negotiators balked after conferring with Tehran.

One western diplomat said that disputes between the camp led by Pezeshkian and Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister, and the other led by IRGC commanders were real even if they were sometimes exaggerated to present a "good cop, bad cop" façade to mediators.

The Iranian regime has always consisted of factions that were balanced by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who played them off against one another. His son is different, and regarded by some analysts as more of a risk-taker prepared to take a lead on strategy.

The question of how to deal with the Americans lies at the heart of the regime's latest divisions.

Hassan Ahmadian, a professor of Middle East studies at the University of Tehran, said: "The [hardline] group sees it as a mistake to let Trump out of the dilemma he created. [The war has] strengthened Iran. Why extricate Trump? It would weaken the regime and lead to another attack." He added that some in this group were happy to play along with negotiations because they believed talks would buy time to prepare for a resumption of war.

Ahmadian said the other faction believed that Iran's leverage would not last for ever and that it was better to strike a deal now, from a position of relative strength, rather than wait and find themselves in a weaker position later after another bout of war with the US.

Mojtaba Khamenei, who is perhaps partly motivated by avenging his father, may be inclined to agree with the first group as he consolidates power.

"The real centre of gravity is an increasingly small clique of senior serving and former Revolutionary Guard commanders bound together by decades of personal and institutional ties to Mojtaba Khamenei," said Ali Vaez, who heads the Iran project at the International Crisis Group. "Iran may still have many voices in the room but fewer hands than ever on the wheel."

Some, like Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the parliamentary Speaker and former IRGC general, have sought to straddle the divide and build consensus. He has been in favour of negotiations, and led the talks at one point, but appeared to walk away empty-handed after the US failed to unfreeze billions in Iranian assets that Tehran had demanded in return for the June ceasefire.

"The pro-confrontation group holds the upper hand," said Farzan Sabet, an Iran expert with the Geneva Graduate Institute.

This group believes that Trump is desperate for an agreement to end the domestically unpopular war and bring down US fuel prices before midterm elections in November, and that Iran has leverage with its closure of the Strait of Hormuz and ability to strike US bases in the Middle East and Gulf infrastructure.

"As long as Tehran believes it has escalation dominance over Washington, the pro-confrontation group is likely to stay in the driver's seat," Sabet said.

Trump halts talks on strait

George Grylls Washington

President Trump has said the US has stopped negotiating with Iran after another ship was struck in the Strait of Hormuz.

The US president posted on Truth Social that "there are no talks or conversations going on, or scheduled, with the Islamic Republic of Iran", adding: "The Naval Blockade remains in full force and effect. The Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated."

His comments came as a ship passing through the strait off the coast of Oman was struck by a projectile, damaging the engine room and resulting "in a crew casualty".

The UK Maritime Trade Operations did not release details about the ship or its cargo. It said the Omani Coast Guard was assisting and the authorities were investigating.

Yesterday Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's top negotiator, said that the strait would remain shut until the US ended its blockade of Iranian ports, lifted oil sanctions, released Tehran's frozen assets and ceased military operations on all fronts.

Beekeepers of Gaza bring hives back from the brink

Hundreds of bees swarm around the bare hands and faces of Niveen al-Ashqar and her husband, Hussein. They are from the last surviving hive of the 300 they inherited from her father (Amal Helles and Gabrielle Weiniger write).

The couple live on the roof of what remains of their home in northern Gaza. The rooftop is divided in two by a sheet, half for them and their seven children, the other half for the bees.

When the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was announced in October, Ashqar, 43, returned to her home in the Jabalia refugee camp. Her family was once a leading producer of honey in Gaza, but she had no idea what would be left of her home and her hives.

"Among the rubble, one beehive was still standing. It was in poor condition, but the bees were still alive, and there were about four kilograms of honey inside. That was the only hive I had left," she said.

"A single hive can produce about 15kg of honey, but production is very limited. There is still strong demand for honey, but we are unable to meet it."

Before the war, there were 1,000 beekeepers across Gaza, tending to more than 35,000 beehives and producing about 370 tonnes of honey a year. Only about 100 beekeepers are left. Apiaries were kept

It's no longer grim up northern France
Page 27

Drug kingpin 'Chubby Jos' evades special forces
Page 28

MOHAMMED M SKAIK/JNA/ZUMA PRESS WIRE/SHUTTERSTOCK; TAHA TAWFEEQ FOR THE TIMES

in the borderlands, where most of the flowers and vegetation bloomed. Those border areas are now military buffer zones, turned to dust from the heavy tracks of the tanks and taken from Gaza as part of Israel's security policy. Other high-vegetation areas have been turned into displacement camps.

The president of the Gaza Beekeepers' Co-operative Society, Ibrahim Naji al-Dabba, says that more than 95 per cent of the sector has been destroyed. "Before the war, we had two honey harvests a year. Now honey production is extremely low," he said while working with his sons in Tel al-Hawa after being displaced from Gaza City. Now, there is only one annual harvest, coming up in February.

Ashqar's family constituted a honey dynasty with four sites in the east, north and south of Gaza, totalling about 300 beehives worth $70,000 per site. The losses caused by the devastation of the war, she estimates, are $250,000. There used to be more hives than needed to supply Gaza, and beekeepers sold a kilo for 30 shekels, about £7. Now, a kilo will sell for up to 30 times more.

Ibrahim Naji al-Dabba, top and left, and Naveen al-Ashqar with her son Omer, above, tend to the hives in the Gaza ruins

Demand has remained steady, honey being used as a traditional healing balm for wounds and the sweet core of delicacies including baklava, balah al-sham and halvah. During the months of relative quiet, Gaza's top beekeepers met and decided to work together. They formed a recovery plan and presented it to global aid organisations, but their requests were rejected by the Israeli authorities, according to Dabba. "The biggest concern is that the sector could disappear completely. Israel has prevented the entry of supplies and equipment needed for beekeeping," he said.

These supplies include sugar, woods, tools and machinery. All the beekeepers visited by The Times were using makeshift equipment and handling bees without protective gear.

"As part of our recovery plan, we decided to start dividing the surviving bee colonies to create new hives," Dabba said. "We decided to begin recovering with whatever was available. We used the equipment and basic materials that remained and started working to rebuild the sector and restore bee colonies."

Some beekeepers were close to giving up, defeated by years of war and life-shattering losses. "I lost almost everything, and for a while I stopped working completely," Ahmed al-Zaqzouq, 41, said from his rooftop apiary in Khan Yunis.

"I had no desire to continue because the situation was so hard … It was my children who changed my mind. They kept encouraging me, telling me I should not give up and that we had to continue. That is why I started again with just four hives."

Zaqzouq had to leave more than 1,000 beehives behind when he fled the war with his family of seven. Like many other beekeepers in Gaza, he inherited the trade from his father and built up the business over two decades.

"When the war came, all of that disappeared," he said. "During the war, we had to use some of the wooden beehive boxes as firewood. Some of the bees I have are kept in wooden boxes that do not even have proper covers."

Zaqzouq is teaching his children about beekeeping. They were stung several times and were scared of the bees at first. But now they "know how to move, without sudden movements", he said. "Before, I thought I would be the one teaching them how to continue this profession. After the war, in a way, they were the ones who brought me back to it. For me, keeping these few hives alive means that something our family built over generations is still alive too."

It is hard to see why Hamas would disarm, Roger Boyes, page 20

Succession-style feud risks future of retail empire

Italy
Tom Kington Rome

Proving truth can be stranger than fiction, the squabbling heirs running one of Italy's biggest companies, Delfin, have trumped the TV series *Succession*.

The hit drama involved four siblings vying for control of their family empire while Delfin, the €55 billion sunglasses, banking and real estate company, has become a battleground for eight heirs. Each were given equal stakes by its founder and the family's patriarch, Leonardo Del Vecchio, who died in 2022 aged 87.

The fight for control has paralysed the holding firm built from scratch by Del Vecchio. It owns the world's largest eyewear company, EssilorLuxottica — in turn the owner of Ray-Ban and Oakley — and has stakes in a slew of Italian banks, making it a key corporate player.

"Equal voting rights are wonderful if they can lead to unanimous decision-making, but they can easily lead to deadlock — you need to choose a successor and pick him or her early," said Roberta Crivellaro of the Italian law firm Withers, which advises family firms on succession.

Del Vecchio split the stakes in Delfin between his six children from three wives, his widow, and her son from a previous marriage — leaving behind a board which has fought over dividends, pay and buy-outs since his death.

The best known of the heirs is Leonardo Maria Del Vecchio, whose lifestyle would do *Succession* proud. An avid Ferrari collector, the 31-year-old is under investigation for a crash involving his Ferrari Purosangue in Milan in November.

He is also a keen DJ and has hosted the rapper 50 Cent at his Milan nightclub. Del Vecchio has become a mainstay in gossip magazines since he fought his ex-partner, a model, influencer and *Big Brother* contestant, in court for custody of their child.

His attempt to buy out two of the other siblings this year to take a controlling stake in Delfin was opposed by Rocco Basilico, his low-profile, LA-based step-brother, who negotiated a deal with Meta to make smart glasses.

Speaking of his love for Italy, Del Vecchio told an interviewer this year: "I have received a lot from this country and it is an obligation and honour to give something back."

The infighting at Delfin is a warning to Italy's legions of family firms facing generational change, according to Carlo Verdone, head of the industrial association Federitaly.

"Ten per cent of Italy's family firms are run by bosses in their seventies, it's a serious problem," Verdone said.

The family firm association Aidaf has said that a third of the family-run companies faced a generational turnover by 2034.

"Setting up equal decision-making power is always a mistake because people have different abilities and because there is a risk of veto, which can be used by the weaker members," Alessandro Minichilli, a corporate governance professor at Milan's Bocconi University, said.

The Del Vecchios are not the only Italian industrial dynasty indulging in infighting. The Agnelli family are mired in court cases and spats over inheritances after the death in 2003 of its patriarch Gianni, who turned Fiat into the country's powerhouse carmaker.

"I have seen a firm with five heirs plummet into liquidation because one constantly vetoed the decision of the other four," Maurizio Quarta, a wealth consultant, said. "On the other hand I have worked with a metals company now on its fifth generation of family management which is a huge success."

Quarta pointed out how Silvio Berlusconi, one of Italy's most successful media moguls, not to mention prime ministers, ensured a seamless and frictionless handover to his children when he died in 2023.

Leonardo Del Vecchio, who founded Delfin, died in 2022

In his will, Berlusconi carefully divided stakes in his Fininvest holding company to leave his two children from his first marriage, Marina and Pier Silvio, with a combined 53 per cent controlling stake, a reward for the established and senior roles they held in Fininvest companies. Berlusconi's three children from his second marriage, who did not have roles in the companies, were given a combined minority stake that nevertheless left them wealthy for life.

Rocco Basilico with his step-brother, Leonardo Maria Del Vecchio

Crivellaro said the three-time prime minister and owner of the country's largest private TV network had mastered the art of succession planning. "Silvio Berlusconi chose in time, well before writing his will," she said.

Del Vecchio agreed. In January he said with a touch of envy that Berlusconi's handover was "a succession that worked well".

World

Trump's 'security blanket' aides hide bad news, says rival

United States
Max Kendix Washington

A top Democrat has doubled down on taunts about President Trump's aides, calling one his "security blanket" who only tells the president what he wants to hear.

Jon Ossoff, a Georgia senator touted as presidential contender for 2028, told a rally at the weekend that Trump "doesn't want to do the job", adding: "He wants to build his ballroom and travel with Natalie on their apparently defenceless flying palace gifted by the emir of Qatar."

Ossoff, 39, was referring to Natalie Harp, a 35-year-old adviser to Trump, who was among the few aides who secretly travelled with the president out of the Nato summit in Turkey last month in a decoy plane in response to a potential threat from Iran.

Harp has been nicknamed the "human printer" because of the portable printer she carries to present information in hard copy to the 80-year-old president. She also writes some of his social media posts which he dictates.

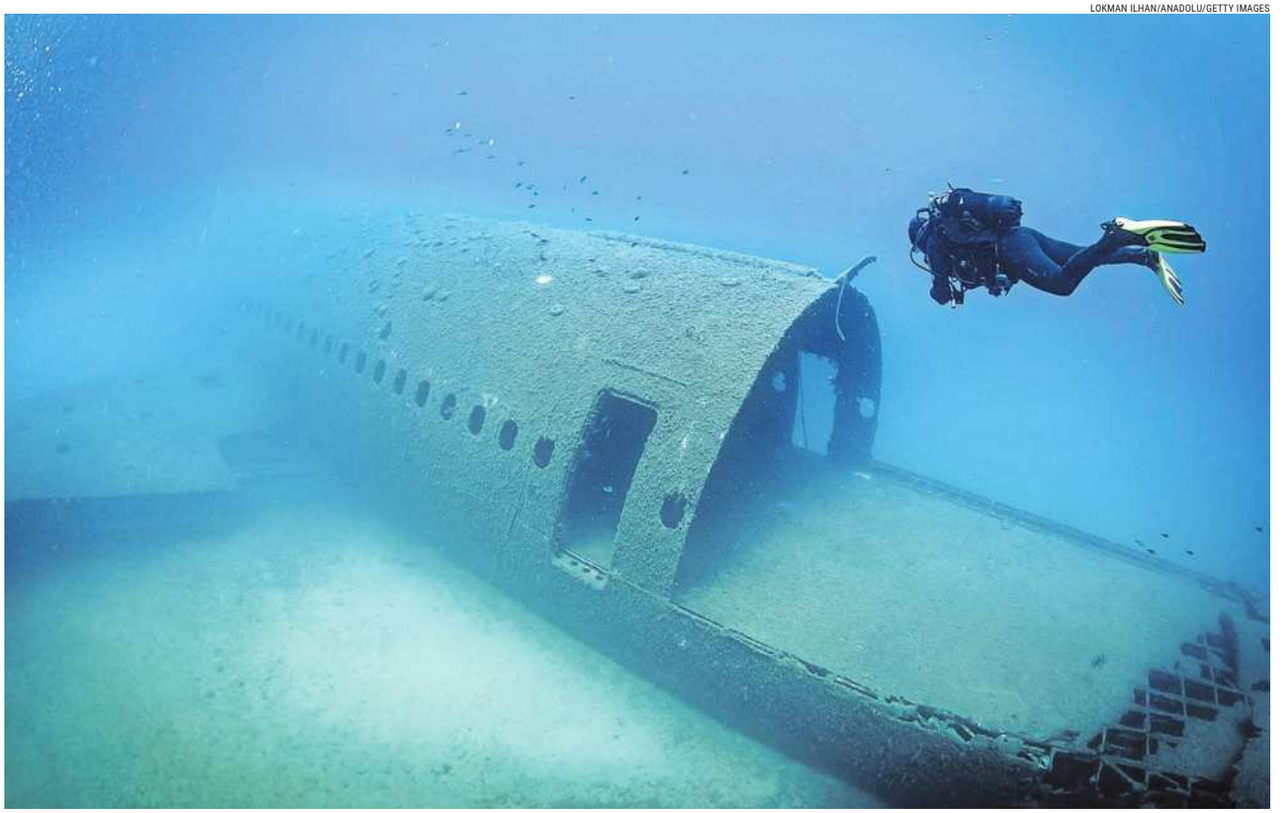
Escalating his attack on Monday, Ossoff told the news outlet MS Now that he'd heard Harp was also known as the president's "security blanket", adding that she and other aides were not telling Trump what he needed to hear.

"They're telling him what he wants to hear," he said. "The nation is at war — and we cannot afford that. We need a team in the White House ... who take their jobs seriously."

Asked about Ossoff's comments, Trump on Monday compared him to Pee-wee Herman, the children's TV character. Davis Ingle, a White House spokesman, called the Democrat a "lightweight "loser" and a "cringeworthy, feminine theatre kid cosplaying as Barack Obama".

Natalie Harp, 35, is a near-constant presence at President Trump's side

LOKMAN ILHAN/ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES



Cabin check **An Airbus A300 rests on the seabed off Kusadasi, western Turkey. It was sunk on purpose ten years ago to form a reef and attract scuba-diving tourists**

Russian campers cause security scare by pitching near Saab boss

Sweden
Charles Bremner

Security staff were alerted when a couple of campers with walkie-talkies pitched their tent beside the summer retreat of the boss of Sweden's biggest arms manufacturer.

After refusing the woman's request, in Russian-accented English, for permission to fish from the jetty, staff called police to the property, near Gavle, 100 miles north of Stockholm on the Gulf of Bothnia.

Tatiana Milenina and Semyon Rusanov, Russians living in Spain, were released last week after five days' questioning. They insisted they were known opponents of President Putin and his invasion of Ukraine. Their two-way radios were simply a wedding gift for use when mobile cover was poor, they said.

The couple's lawyer said they had been unaware they were camping near a security zone. However, the episode, amplified by false reports that they had a military-grade radio, has raised concern about Russian attempts to target leaders of Europe's defence industry for assassination.

Moscow is stepping up its hybrid European offensive, mixing cyber-assault with disinformation, street actions, drone flights, sabotage and murder. As a consequence Micael Johansson, whose firm, Saab, is about to supply its Gripen multi-role fighter jets to Ukraine, is under state protection.

"My role is quite sensitive. That is why the security guards checked these people," Johansson told SVT, a Swedish television channel. "What Saab does is, of course, very important for our armed forces and for other countries as well."

Until recently, Moscow's European "hits" had mainly been Russians and Ukrainians hunted down in exile, such as Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, a Chechen-Georgian man shot dead in Berlin in 2019, and Maxim Kuzminov, a fugitive Russian helicopter pilot murdered in Spain in 2024.

Semyon Rusanov and Tatiana Milenina were questioned by police for five days

In May, French and other intelligence officials reported a sharp increase in assassination attempts. Targets included Vladimir Osechkin, a Russian anti-regime activist who lives in France under police protection.

Russia has moved to active operations to kill defence executives involved in supplying Ukraine, European and US intelligence services have reported. Several plots have been thwarted.

This month, the German security authorities concluded that Russian intelligence was preparing to murder Stefan Thumann, head of the drone manufacturer Donaustahl, according to Die Zeit, a newspaper. A Ukrainian man and a Romanian woman are alleged to have monitored his home and place of work, as well as his family.

In Sweden, suspicion lingers about the Russian campers. Moscow regularly deploys agents posing as exiled opponents of Putin, experts say.

"Many of those arrested for activities linked to Russian authorities have simultaneously engaged in support for Ukraine," Stefan Ingvarsson, an analyst at the Stockholm Centre for Eastern European Studies, said.

"Such involvement ultimately means nothing and can serve as a way to get people to lower their guard. I believe there is a level of naivety around this among many Russian exiles," he told Dagens Nyheter, a Swedish newspaper.

Hotels evacuated after Granada earthquake

Spain A 4.8-magnitude earthquake struck the southern province of Granada yesterday, injuring three people and forcing the evacuation of hotels and parts of the Alhambra complex.

Its epicentre was near Gójar, about six miles south of the city, according to Spain's National Geographic Institute.

Owing to the shallow depth, the tremor was felt strongly in the city and surrounding areas.

Three people suffered minor injuries, according to Andalusian emergency officials.

One of them, a child, was taken to hospital. Emergency services received more than 500 calls reporting cracks in buildings, falling debris and other earthquake-related incidents.

The tremor struck at about 10.37am and sent frightened residents on to the streets. Falling masonry damaged several vehicles, and cracks were reported in homes, churches and public buildings. Authorities said initial inspections had not found major structural damage.

At the Alhambra, a Unesco world heritage site and one of Spain's leading tourist attractions, authorities evacuated the Nasrid palaces and the Alcazaba fortress, and suspended public access whilst specialists assessed the earthquake's impact.

Several aftershocks followed, including tremors of 4.3 and 4.0 magnitude. Another strong tremor in Granada on Saturday had caused no reported injuries.

Arrests cloud election

Zambia President Hichilema has won a second term after a fraught election in which opposition figures were arrested. Police detained 11 people at the home of his closest rival, Brian Mundubile, hours after the polls closed on Friday, accusing them of posing a threat to state security. The opposition candidate condemned the raid as an attack on his life.

King goes on sick leave

Norway King Harald V has been put on sick leave for two weeks after being taken to hospital, the royal palace announced. The 89-year-old is Europe's oldest reigning monarch has haemolytic anaemia, in which red blood cells are destroyed abnormally quickly. Harald will be supported by his heir apparent, Crown Prince Haakon, who will serve as regent.

Peace pledge omitted

Japan Sanae Takaichi, the prime minister, has caused controversy after the word "remorse" and a pledge to "never wage war" were dropped from a speech. "Japan has consistently walked the path of a nation that values peace," she said before bereaved relatives at the Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead, held to remember victims of the Second World War.

Baby-size bladder stone

Sri Lanka Doctors have removed a 3.1kg (6.8lb) bladder stone from a man admitted to hospital after suffering a stroke. The stone, about the size of an ostrich egg and weighing as much as a newborn baby, had likely been in his bladder for up to ten years, surgeons said. The man, 55, was in good health and remained in hospital for other treatment.

It's no longer grim up northern France

France

Adam Sage Paris

SAMEER AL-DOUMY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

In recent years, the beaches of north-east France were deserted by British tourists because of their association with migrants seeking to cross the Channel to the UK.

They were also snubbed by Parisians who tended to view the region's resorts as downbeat and working class, albeit with a few exceptions such as Le Touquet, where President Macron and Brigitte, his wife, have a holiday home.

This year, however, as unprecedented heatwaves grip Europe, the Côte d'Opale, the Channel coastline which includes Calais and Boulogne-sur-Mer, is enjoying a tourism boom.

Nord Littoral, the regional daily, said British holidaymakers had made a "great comeback", while officials said people from southern regions in France were driving northwards in search of cooler temperatures.

The Hauts-de-France regional council said sea breezes on the Côte d'Opale meant that temperatures tended to be 10C lower than in inland towns, helping to boost local tourism.

The cost of living crisis and the price of petrol may also explain the influx of Britons and other northern Europeans, notably Belgians, according to analysts. Driving distances are shorter and accommodation can be more than 20 per cent cheaper than in the south.

Valérie Sobierajski, director of the tourist office in Pas-de-Calais, told Radio 6, the local station, that the number of British tourists was 53 per cent higher in the first two months of July than over the same period last year. She added that Parisians were also starting to take holidays in the north, along with people from the Lyon region and the Loire Valley.

Sobierajski said she expected the trend to continue next year, adding: "When they have had 40C for the past month, they will want to come up to us for fresh air."

Overall, the number of tourists in the northeast was 13 per cent higher in June than in the same month last year, according to La Voix du Nord.

Le Monde said Wimereux, a small resort frequented by migrants wanting to cross the Channel in recent years, had suddenly become fashionable. It quoted a shopkeeper who said: "We have never known a summer like it."

The shopkeeper speculated that Wimereux could "become like Saint-Tropez", the glamorous French Riviera resort made famous by Brigitte Bardot in the 1950s and 1960s.

While that may be something of an exaggeration, the town, which boasts Belle Époque architecture, has enjoyed glowing coverage in other publications including Grazia, the fashion and lifestyle magazine, this summer.

Tourism officials say there is almost no accommodation available in the resort for the rest of the holiday season, and even the local ice-cream maker is struggling to keep up with demand.

Resorts such as Wimereux, which has been a base for migrants trying to cross the Channel, are becoming more popular with holidaymakers seeking cooler temperatures as heatwaves grip southern parts of the country

Normandy is enjoying a similar boom, with officials saying they have witnessed a rise in visitors from southern France. Officials in Seine-Maritime, the Normandie département which includes towns and cities such as Rouen, Le Havre and Dieppe, said it was on course for a record year.

On the Côtes d'Azur, by contrast, the season is "mixed", according to France 3, the state broadcaster. It said hotels were full but restaurants were struggling for custom, with diners fleeing high prices and sun-blasted terraces.

Despite shifting habits, the northeast has a long way to go before catching up with better known tourist regions. A poll by the Elabe institute in July found that the only Côte d'Opale resort among France's 50 favourite seaside holiday destinations was Le Touquet. The chart was dominated by Atlantic coast resorts, with Ré Island, Biarritz and Oléron Island taking the top three places.

The poll showed that the lure of the Côtes d'Azur – beloved by British aristocrats in the 19th and early 20th centuries – was dwindling among French tourists, with only Nice in the top 10.

Summer is peak season for danger on world's tallest mountains

Elizabeth Rushton

Everest was summited for the first time in the month of May. The first climbers known to have reached the tops of Annapurna and Broad Peak did so in June, K2 and the Matterhorn were scaled for the first time in July, and Mont Blanc and the Eiger in August.

For decades, summer has been the peak season for climbers seeking to conquer some of the world's highest mountains. But there has been a near total reversal of this practice in recent years, with peaks in Europe and Asia no longer seen as safe to climb in the hottest months.

Higher temperatures caused by climate change cause the thawing of snow, ice and permafrost, which normally hold loose rocks near mountain summits in place meaning that rockfalls and avalanches occur more easily.

"The problem for mountaineers is that you can't predict what will happen", said Simon Messner, an Italian mountaineer, who runs an alpine farm in the South Tyrol region between Austria and Italy. "It really is becoming a sort of Russian roulette."

Recent months have been marked by a string of fatalities on peaks in Europe and Asia. Nirmal Purja, a renowned British climber, was among 11 people killed in an avalanche on Pakistan's 8,047-metre Broad Peak at the end of July.

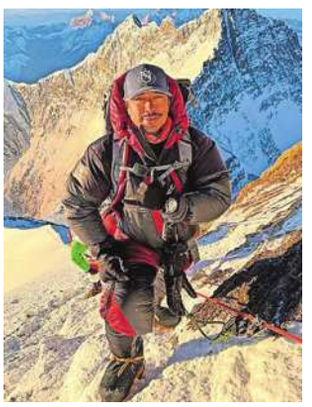
At around the same time, a Finnish man was reported missing while climbing the Matterhorn.

Three weeks earlier, two climbers fell to their deaths while coming down the same mountain. Relatives of the Israeli climber Alam Fares, 32, said he had contacted them after reaching the Matterhorn summit at 4,478 metres alongside his climbing partner, 37, from Belarus. However, contact was lost a few hours later, and witnesses described seeing two climbers plunge after a rockfall at about 4,030 metres.

Fares, an engineer who had recently got engaged, was an experienced mountaineer who had scaled more than 40 peaks.

In July 2025, Laura Dahlmeier, 25, an Olympic biathlete, died after being struck by rockfall while climbing the Laila Peak in Pakistan. Dahlmeier had contacted Messner as she prepared for her climb to ask about conditions on the mountain. "That flexibility, keeping an open mind, is something we mountaineers now need to apply more often", he said. "But it also shows how difficult the situation has become — even for climbers of her calibre."

As climbers spurn summer expeditions, Messner warned that greater footfall in winter could bring its own problems. "When two or three rope teams are climbing the same route on a large ledge, it doesn't make it any less dangerous", he said. "Without meaning to, you're always dislodging rock by climbing on the ice. That's a hazard that's likely to increase."



Nirmal Purja, 43, died in July after an avalanche on Broad Peak in Pakistan

The Swiss Mountain Guides Association has adapted its training for guides with an emphasis on geology and glaciology, so that guides are better informed about increasing instability of rock faces. Climbers should also plan longer trips in order to give themselves time to assess the risk on the ground, Messner suggested.

Messner said he was most worried by what the changes would mean in the long term for alpine communities. Heavy rockfall could endanger roads, and melting glaciers could result in water shortages, he added.

World

Chinese pensioners muscle in on global fitness craze Hyrox

In decades past, foreigners visiting China were often surprised that the exercise equipment dotted around public parks was mostly occupied by older people — some very old (Jan Camenzind Broomby writes).

The country has changed with the times, and western-style gyms are now ubiquitous. Now, the latest high-intensity workout to take the fitness world by storm has arrived: Hyrox, a hybrid fitness challenge that combines running, weightlifting and endurance training.

Led by the 75-year-old, Wang Shi — nicknamed the "grey-haired youth" by his many fans — Chinese pensioners are prominent participants in the intense activity workout.

"It was young people who helped bring this movement to China," Wang said in a promotional video. "But I'm happy I've been inspired by young people and, through them, learnt about it."

Last year, China's obsession with longevity briefly received a high-level endorsement when a camera microphone picked up President Xi and President Putin in Beijing discussing the merits of organ transplants as a means of achieving immortality.

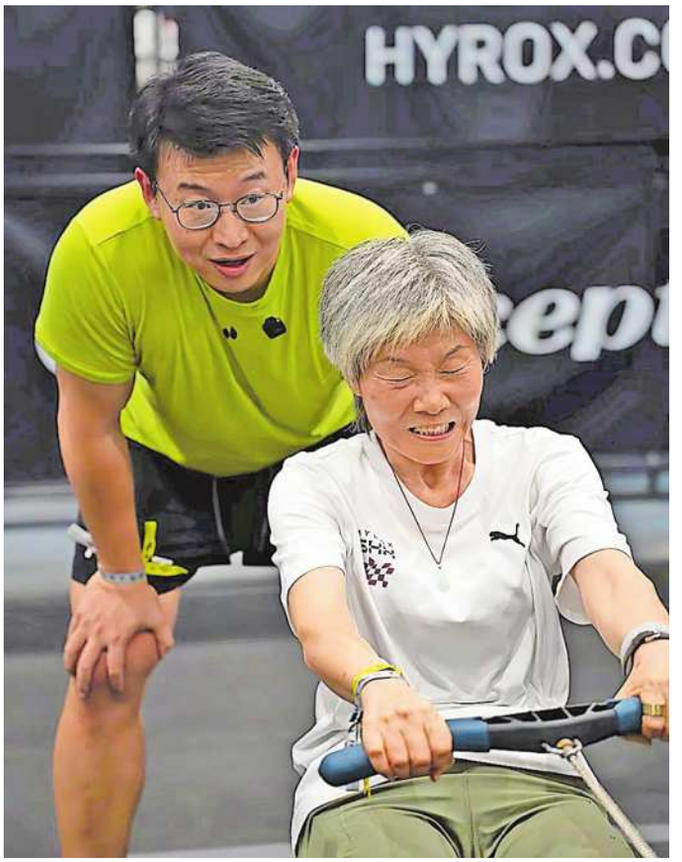
"With the development of biotechnology, human organs can be constantly transplanted," Putin said.

Xi replied: "The prediction is that in this century, humans may live up to 150 years old."

The video was swiftly removed from the Chinese internet.

But good health in old age does not always require surgery. Parks and town squares across China are often filled with pensioners practising tai chi or line dancing together in the evenings.

Many are more ambitious, plunging into icy ponds during the bitter winter to build resilience.



Hyrox is a natural development. Launched in Germany in 2017, the sport has spread quickly around the world.

Contests are scheduled in five Chinese cities, and a recent race in Shanghai attracted 10,000 participants. Most were aged between 25 and 44, but not all.

Mary Ma, 66, competes alongside her son, Norton Wang. The events are held in several Chinese cities

"Fitness has always been one of my interests, but I've never done it in such a structured way before," said Mary Ma, 66, from the eastern province of Shandong.

Ma, who was competing alongside her son, Norton Wang, in her first Hyrox challenge, said she was afraid she would not be able to finish. But her nerves faded as she heard the chants of supporters along the sidelines.

"Just being able to participate felt very good," she said.

China has become more individualistic in the post-Mao years, but there remains a strong sense of sport being a collective enterprise.

The mother and son's next tournament is in October, when they will take on sled pushes, lunges, burpees, rowing, a farmer's carry and about five miles of running.

Hyrox aims to be "inclusive", and its age categories reach above 70. Start times are staggered at ten-minute intervals so that no athlete feels they have finished in last place.

"For people in our age group, rankings don't really matter," Ma said. "The important thing is taking part."

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Kingpin 'Chubby Jos' evades special forces

The Netherlands

Elizabeth Rushton
Jane Flanagan Africa Correspondent

Dutch special forces twice lay in wait on a covert vessel off the west African coast, hoping to seize one of Europe's most wanted fugitives as he motored between two of the region's cocaine trafficking hubs.

Twice the operation was aborted at the last moment. But now the Netherlands is intensifying its campaign to flush out Jos "Bolle Jos" Leijdekkers — whose nickname means "Chubby Jos" in English — from Sierra Leone, where he is living under an alias and powerful protection, and pushing the European Union to threaten to cut off aid.

The pressure has intensified since Spain's Civil Guard seized more than 30 tonnes of cocaine, Europe's largest single cocaine bust, from a cargo ship organised, investigators said, by Leijdekkers himself. The Arconian was intercepted in international waters in May after it left Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, with the haul worth an estimated £700 million.

The ship was due to meet speedboats at sea that would have carried the drugs towards the Spanish coast in a delivery said to have been personally arranged by Leijdekkers.

"He had those 30 tonnes stored in Sierra Leone, and he organised the transport and supplied the drugs," Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Remacha, head of Spain's anti-drug trafficking force, told the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. Leijdekkers, 35, who has been on the run for more than four years, has not been charged in the Spanish case.

The aborted Dutch operation by marines and elite police commandos in African waters, first reported by De Telegraaf, involved weeks of training on land and at sea. The commandos were preparing to intercept Leijdekkers as he sped towards Liberia, another country caught up in west Africa's expanding cocaine trade. The Public Prosecution Service declined to say why the missions were called off, citing an ongoing investigation.

Jos "Bolle Jos" Leijdekkers is living under protection in Sierra Leone

Leijdekkers has been convicted and sentenced in absentia to 24 years in the Netherlands for cocaine trafficking and ordering a murder. A Belgian court gave him a further 14 years last month over a case involving the importation of at least 25 tonnes of cocaine through Antwerp. A Rotterdam court has ordered him to repay more than €96 million to the Dutch state. He is said to have amassed a personal fortune of about €1 billion. Dutch authorities are offering a €200,000 reward for information leading to his arrest.

Since disappearing from Europe, he surfaced in Sierra Leone, where he has been living a brazenly luxurious life under protection said to be linked to a relationship with a daughter of President Bio.

Fatima Bio, the first lady, recently told the BBC she had never heard of Leidjekkers and dismissed any connection to her family. Sierra Leonean police, acting on a Dutch request to locate him for extradition, said they had traced him under the alias "Umar Sheriff" to several locations, but failed to find him.

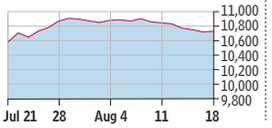
The Netherlands is now trying a regional approach, by teaming up with Sierra Leone's neighbours. At a conference in Ghana in July, David van Weel, the Dutch justice minister, met his Sierra Leonean counterpart, Alpha Sesay, to press for Leijdekkers's extradition, and told reporters that Ghana and Liberia were growing "frustrated" with Sierra Leone's handling of the case.

In June Liberia seized a 237.6kg cocaine shipment bound for Britain, which police said had been organised by Leijdekkers. Gregory Coleman, its police chief, has insisted that Liberia will "no longer be a place of comfort" for drug traffickers.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,728.04 (+7.74) ▲



Dow Jones
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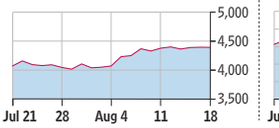
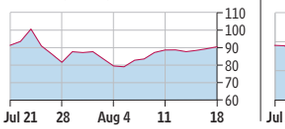
COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,394.01 (-3.73) ▼

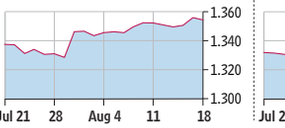


Brent crude (6pm)
$91.37 (+2.20) ▲



CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3543 (-0.0018) ▼



£/€
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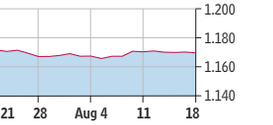

Relocating GSK research centre a 'vanity project', say former chiefs

Alex Ralph

A former chief executive of GSK and a former head of research have questioned the FTSE 100 company's decision to relocate its global R&D centre at Stevenage to Cambridge.

GSK announced plans in July to close its large 31-year-old research and development site in the Hertfordshire town and relocate staff to a new facility in Cambridge and an upgraded existing site at nearby Ware as part of a £400 million UK investment.

Sir Richard Sykes was chief executive of a newly merged Glaxo Wellcome when the Stevenage site opened in 1995 — then Britain's second-biggest construction project after the Channel Tunnel. He said: "In my opinion it has been a great success and attracted an entire research infrastructure to be built around it. Why move? One could argue that being close to one of the world's top science universities and an enormous research park would have its advantages in terms of innovation".

But he added: "It's a big and expensive decision and difficult for me to understand; why leave a stable and interactive environment in Stevenage?"

Luke Miels, GSK's former chief commercial officer who was promoted to chief executive last September, has said the investment in Cambridge, a global life sciences hub, would accelerate the group's R&D and help it deliver new blockbuster drugs.

Clive Dix, a former research director at Glaxo, a biotech entrepreneur and former deputy chairman of the government's Covid-19 vaccines taskforce, said: "This is just typical of a big organisation having somebody very high up wanting to have their own project. It's almost like a vanity project."

Dix, who helped host Queen Elizabeth II when she unveiled the Stevenage site in April 1995, also said: "I'm quite negative on moving big sites and what's left at Stevenage will develop into something like the Alderley Edge site did. Alderley Edge is just starting to get a feel as a bit of a science hub, but it was like a desert for years."

AstraZeneca, Britain's other big pharma company, relocated from Alderley Park, Cheshire, to a new £1.1 billion Cambridge global R&D headquarters.

Stevenage's dream in doubt, pages 30-31

UK borrowing costs near 20-year high

Bond sell-off gathers pace amid inflation fears

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The cost the government has to pay to raise new debt has reached its highest level in nearly two decades as a global bond sell-off gathered momentum amid mounting fears about inflation and persistently high public borrowing.

The UK government sold a ten-year bond with a yield of 5.155 per cent, the highest interest rate attached to any such debt with the same time period since August 2007.

Just last month the same debt was sold with a yield of 5.04 per cent, underscoring the sharp rise in global government bond yields as investors fret over the war in the Middle East and its potential to keep inflation higher for longer by leaving the Strait of Hormuz effectively shut.

The milestone is cause for concern for Andy Burnham and John Healey, the chancellor, as they mull their tax and spending plans before the budget on October 28.

Debt interest spending in the UK is on track to exceed £100 billion every year until the early 2030s, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility, and economists have claimed that the UK's fiscal headroom has been reduced by more than half to just £10 billion, in part due to higher bond yields.

Burnham has launched a policy blitz to try to ease the cost of living, including capping most single bus journeys in England at £2, at a time of squeezed public finances and rising prices.

Inflation is set to accelerate in the second half and investors still believe that the Bank of England will be forced to raise interest rates to deal with price pressures, especially if there is a further escalation in the Gulf conflict.

UK 30-year yields rose by 0.04 percentage points to 5.86 per cent yesterday, close to the post-1998 peak that they hit during the early stages of the US-Iran war.

The yield on the 30-year US Treasury reached 5.33 per cent, its highest level since 2007, while the yield on the German equivalent hit a 15-year high of 3.78 per cent. Yields and prices move inversely. Economists in the US think the debt-to-GDP ratio could exceed its post-Second World War high of 126 per cent in a decade. The country's debt stock has hit almost $40 trillion.

Data published today is expected to show UK inflation jumped to 2.9 per cent in July from 2.6 per cent in the previous month. On Friday, the Office for National Statistics is expected to say government borrowing has exceeded the OBR's forecasts since the beginning of the fiscal year in April.

Long-term bond yields globally have come under particularly heavy selling in recent days, signalling investors' anxiety. Japanese long-term government borrowing costs also rose to a near record high yesterday as the Bank of Japan prepares to raise interest rates before the end of the year.

Market participants have speculated that the deluge of bond sales by the world's largest technology companies to raise cash for investment spending tied to the building of artificial intelligence infrastructure has also pulled long-term government bond yields higher.

An increase in the supply of bonds typically pushes yields upwards and prices downwards in order to give investors enough incentive to buy the additional instruments, putting extra

Continued on page 30

VICTOR BOYKO/WIREIMAGE

Who's the boss? The actress Larsen Thompson was at Hugo Boss's show during Milan Fashion Week; Mike Ashley has tightened his grip on the label Page 37

Claridge's group picks chairman

Jessica Newman

The hotel group behind Claridge's has appointed its first chairman in an effort to restore stability after several years of legal disputes.

Maybourne Hotel Group, which also owns the Berkeley and the Connaught, has named José Silva, an industry veteran, to guide the business through global expansion plans.

Maybourne, which operates six hotels — four in London, one in Beverly Hills in Los Angeles and another on the French Riviera — has set its sights on growing its portfolio rapidly over the next few years, and aims to expand into Paris, New York, Miami and Dubai.

Silva joins Maybourne from the Dubai-based Jumeirah, the Emirati state-owned luxury hotel chain, where he was chief executive. Prior to that he spent almost a quarter of a century at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Marc Socker, Maybourne's chief executive, said Silva was "uniquely qualified" to guide the company through its expansion and said he was looking forward to "benefiting from his counsel and leadership".

Silva will take up his role after a difficult few years for Maybourne, with a long-running dispute between its Qatari owners and its former developer Paddy McKillen.

The billionaire Irish property investor and developer sold a 36 per cent stake in the company to a group of Qatari investors, including Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, the former prime minister of Qatar, known as HBJ, in 2015.

HBJ's investment in Maybourne had ended a four-year legal battle between McKillen and the hotels' former majority shareholders, the Barclay brothers.

McKillen had been retained on a seven-year consultancy contract to run Maybourne and renovate and extend the estate. As part of the deal, McKillen was entitled to a bonus. He was reportedly awarded between £700 million and £800 million by the London Court of International Arbitration last year.

Need to know

1 The cost of paying off newly issued UK government debt has reached its highest level in nearly two decades as a global bond sell-off gathered momentum yesterday amid mounting fears about inflation and persistently high public borrowing. Page 29

2 A former chief executive of GSK and a former head of research have questioned the FTSE 100 company's decision to relocate its global research and development centre from Stevenage to Cambridge. Page 29

3 The hotel group behind Claridge's has appointed its first chairman in an effort to restore stability after several years of legal disputes. Maybourne Hotel Group, which also owns the Berkeley and the Connaught, has named José Silva, an industry veteran, as its chairman to guide the business through global expansion plans. Page 29

4 Fund managers have more of their money invested in stocks than at any point in almost five years amid growing optimism that the global economy is set for a "boom".

5 The Bank of England is poised to keep interest rates on hold for the remainder of the year and then potentially cut them three times in 2027, analysts predicted after new data yesterday showed that pay growth fell to a six-year low and hiring remained sluggish. Page 32

6 BHP, the world's largest listed miner, reported better-than-expected full-year results boosted by demand for copper, which accounted for more than half of its profits for the first time. Page 34

7 Mobico, the transport company behind National Express, has agreed a £24 million deal to sell its last remaining UK bus operations, bringing them into public hands after more than three decades. Page 35

8 Mike Ashley's Frasers Group has tightened its grip on Hugo Boss but not by enough to take control of the German fashion house. Page 37

"Putting a product into the world that increases in value is something of a holy grail for a firm

Graham Ruddick, page 33

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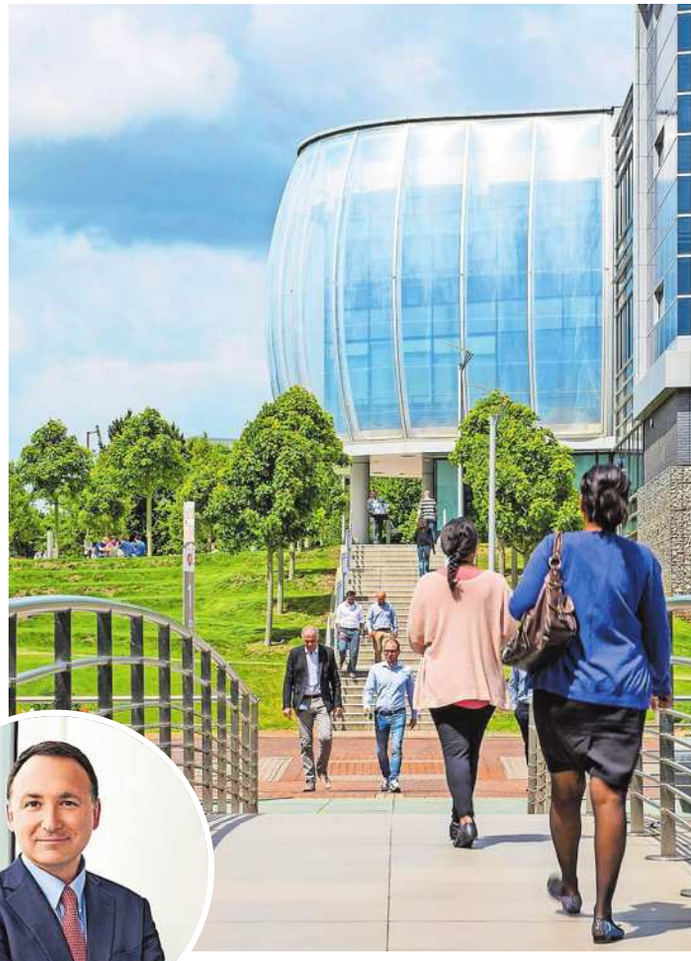
Stevenage's biotech dream in

Pharma giant's move to Cambridge raises fears for town's life sciences cluster. Can it survive? **Alex Ralph** writes



At the King George V playing fields in Stevenage in June, GSK was among the sponsors of a celebration commemorating 80 years since its designation as the UK's first new town.

About 30,000 people attended the community event, which included live music and stalls, as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics-themed activities.

Just weeks later, however, the Hertfordshire town's prospects have been thrown into doubt by GSK's "shock" decision to relocate its 31-year-old global research and development centre — the base for 1,800 employees — from Stevenage to Cambridge.

The FTSE 100 big pharma company's decision, announced alongside a strategy update at the London Stock Exchange last month by its new chief executive, Luke Miels, has raised concerns about the future of the local economy and its life sciences sector.

The relocation plans have also raised questions over the prospects of recent large property investments.

Both the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst and the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult are located on the vast campus on the town's southern outskirts.

GSK's decision, involving a "phased move" by 2029, signals a significant U-turn on its plans five years ago when it set out ambitions for Stevenage to become one of Europe's largest biotech clusters and to help create 5,000 highly skilled jobs over the next decade.

UBS Asset Management and Reef Group acquired 33 acres of neighbouring land from GSK in 2022 to invest up to £900 million to develop about 1.4 million sq ft of life sciences labs, manufacturing and office space.

Completion of the first phase of the new campus, called Elevate Quarter, was targeted for the end of 2025 and UBS has been forecasting a £1.5 billion valuation once it is developed.

UBS, though, has been adapting its plans, and amendments were approved in March for a more diversified development. It is understood that demand from start-up life sciences companies has not materialised as strongly as expected, according to industry sources.

The joint venture partners also received planning committee approval in February 2023 for the redevelopment of The Forum shopping centre in the new town centre to create more than 400,000 sq ft of new lab space.

A new 81,000 sq ft manufacturing facility at The Forum has been completed and leased by Autolus Therapeutics, a T-cell cancer therapies company spun out from University College London and one of the catalyst's most successful businesses. But high street chains around The Forum remain boarded up.

A spokesman for UBS said that the asset manager was "confident that our ongoing developments will continue to attract investment and deliver lasting economic benefits".

Nationally, GSK's plans — to invest £400 million in the UK over three years, acquiring a new facility under development by Prologis at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) and upgrading its nearby drug development site at Ware — have been welcomed by Andy Burnham. The prime minister, a former health secretary, has called it "a boost for home-grown innovation and expertise".

There is relief that GSK has committed to the UK at a time when multinationals including AstraZeneca, Britain's other big pharma company, are investing billions of dollars in the United States. AstraZeneca in April also resumed a £200 million investment at its Cambridge headquarters.

There is also belief that despite potentially putting more pressure on Cambridge's infrastructure, the move broadly supports the government's ambition to turn the "Oxford-Cambridge corridor" into "Europe's Silicon Valley" and is commutable for employees in Stevenage.

Some biotech leaders are optimistic that start-ups in life sciences and adjacent sectors can continue to be scaled up locally, including by some departing GSK scientists not planning to relocate to Ware or Cambridge.

Airbus and MBDA, the defence group, are among Stevenage's other large private sector employers.

Yet GSK's "sudden" decision has been met with dismay by the local council leader and criticism from Kevin Bonavia, the Labour MP for Stevenage, who has said he is "deeply frustrated by the lack of meaningful engagement from GSK before these plans were announced". GSK was restricted by needing to report its financial update to the stock market first.

Bonavia is preparing to act as a link between Westminster and a local stakeholder group being mobilised to help manage GSK's exit.

Coleen De Freitas, co-deputy leader of Stevenage borough council, said it had been a "bit of a shock" and estimated the relocation was an £80 million-a-year hit to the local economy.

Veteran former company bosses, who oversaw the R&D move and consolidation in Stevenage in the mid-1990s by what was then a newly-merged Glaxo Wellcome, have also questioned the decision by Miels, who was promoted from chief commercial officer to chief executive in September.

The R&D centre was at the time Britain's second-biggest construction project after the Channel Tunnel.

Miels was contentiously poached in 2017 from AstraZeneca, which relocated its R&D base from Alderley Park in Cheshire to a new £1.1 billion facility at the CBC.

Recently approved promising drugs discovered or part-discovered by scien-

Fund managers expect global boom

Tom Howard

Fund managers have more of their money invested in stocks than at any point in almost five years amid growing optimism that the global economy is set for a boom.

A closely watched monthly survey by Bank of America, which polls scores of investors who run almost $600 billion of client money between them, revealed that their allocation to equities is at its highest since November 2021.

Those investors have been bullish on the global stock market for over a year, a stance that has paid off, despite the continuing conflict in the Middle East.

US and European stock markets hit record highs this month and the FTSE 100 also briefly set a new record at the end of July.

Some analysts have started to air concerns that certain valuation metrics look stretched and fear that a downturn may be around the corner. Elias Hilmer, a markets economist at Capital Economics, said this week that the "artificial intelligence rally may be entering its final innings".

Fund managers, however, are more upbeat, the survey showed. Only 3.5 per cent of their funds is in cash, the sixth-lowest level ever recorded by Bank of America, which described the reading as "uber low". Cash levels are a key gauge for how confident the world's biggest fund managers are: if they are keeping lots of cash, it is a sign that they are cautious about the immediate outlook for financial markets.

The latest survey found more investors forecasting an economic boom over the next 12 months than at any point since February 2022, while the number predicting double-digit earnings growth for listed companies was at its highest since August 2021.

The "consensus conviction" among those polled was that there will be no economic hangover from aggressive interest rate increases by central banks over the past few years, while investors do not expect the US Federal Reserve to raise rates again before November.

With the likes of Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and Oracle having racked up more than $3 trillion of off-balance sheet spending commitments to drive the AI revolution, the fund managers acknowledged that their huge spending would be the thing most likely to cause a "systemic credit event". However, the vast majority of investors do not expect any of those hyperscalers to reduce their spending this year.

There was some good news for white-collar workers who are considered to be most at risk from AI. Asked if or when the technology would lead to widespread job losses, most respondents said they do not expect it to "materially disrupt the labour market".

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Bond prices near 20-year highs

strain on companies or governments that need to repay such debt.

Oil prices edged higher as Iran said the Strait of Hormuz would remain closed and Washington ruled out extending a ceasefire. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was up by 0.63 per cent to $91.16 a barrel and WTI, the US benchmark, rose by 1.35 per cent to $85.64. "We see further pain in the near term and upward pressure on oil prices," Mohit Kumar, an economist at Jefferies, said.

Bond market jitters spread to equities and Wall Street in particular as investors trimmed holdings in AI-related stocks amid concern that demand for processors and other building blocks of data centres may fizzle out if AI proves less profitable than promised. Nvidia fell 2.3 per cent to $219.74 and the semiconductor manufacturer Sandisk was down 9 per cent to $1,625.78, contributing to a 1.3 per cent drop in the Nasdaq and a fall of 0.7 per cent for the S&P 500.

doubt as GSK quits

ALAMY; GSK

GSK's Stevenage research centre was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1995 but now the big pharma firm, led by Luke Miels, far left, is relocating it to Cambridge

tists at Stevenage include Exdensur, a drug for severe asthma, and Blenrep, a multiple myeloma medicine.

Former staff have recalled how the site featured in the 2001 film *Spy Game* starring Brad Pitt and Robert Redford.

Stevenage was designed to help Glaxo Wellcome, which went on to merge with SmithKline Beecham in 2000 to create GlaxoSmithKline, lift its research productivity in order to reduce its reliance on the blockbuster Zantac. Thirty years later, GSK is similarly focused on broadening its drugs pipeline to grow beyond a 2031 target to generate £40 billion of group revenues.

Former GSK employees who have since led Stevenage-based biotech companies have mixed views on the outlook for the town's ecosystem.

Mary Kerr, a former GSK vice-president who co-founded Kandy Therapeutics, a menopause drugs company that traces its roots to GSK, said: "It is a massive blow for the image of the town and it is probably a massive blow for the area because obviously you've got a fairly well-paid couple of thousand people ... fuelling the economy." She said the move was likely to affect discovery science lab-based companies, rather than virtual outsourced biotechs.

Chris Hollowood, the chief executive of Syncona, the FTSE 250 venture firm, and a founding investor in Autolus, said: "The catalyst and the catapult operate fairly independently of GSK and so I am not sure there is a lot of integrated function that will be lost. It depends what happens to the facility but access to seminar rooms and similar amenities may still persist."

Neil Miller, co-founder and chief executive of NRG Therapeutics, a clinical-stage neuroscience company and tenant of the catalyst which has also been expanding in Cambridge, said: "The real positive is GSK have decided to stay in the UK."

Miller, who formerly worked at GSK and has been "in and around the campus" for about 30 years, said he believed there had been a "trend downward in terms of the number of people" over the years and therefore GSK's decision was not a "huge surprise" to him.

Jackie Hunter, chairwoman of Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, who also worked at GSK, said that it was an opportunity to broaden the site beyond therapeutics towards areas such as defence, data and green energy, and to follow Alderley Park, which she said was now a "thriving" campus.

"So all the stakeholders have an interest in convening and using this as a catalyst, if you can pardon the pun, for really driving growth to replace the jobs that will be lost or moved for GSK."

She added that the catalyst, a not-for-profit organisation created by GSK, the Wellcome Trust and the government in 2012 to support start-ups and scale-ups, was independent of GSK.

Jacqueline Barry, chief clinical officer at the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, said that because GSK had exited the cell and gene market in 2022, the latest move would not affect the catapult. "I see it as complementary. You've got Cambridge doing the R&D and you've got us focusing on advanced manufacturing," she said.

GSK believes it has a track record of exiting legacy sites responsibly and sensitively, and plans to work with local stakeholders to understand how it can help manage the move and legacy.

The company, which invests £1.5 billion a year in UK R&D, has started a consultation process with employee representatives and plans to consult directly with employees later this year.

Signature Living boss gets director ban

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

A manager at a debt management firm who "egregiously lied" to a court during his disqualification as a director has been banned from working in financial services. The Financial Conduct Authority barred Howard Duckett, 64, of Beauforce Corporation after he failed to say he had been banned from acting as a director for a decade in 2020 and also because of his conduct during the disqualification, which related to a different business, when the court found he "repeatedly lied on oath".

The founder of Signature Living, which raised £140 million from investors, has been banned from being a company director, weeks after the Serious Fraud Office dropped an investigation into the property group.

Lawrence Kenwright has been the director of almost 100 companies, including more than 60 under the Liverpool-based Signature property investment brand.

An investigation by the government's Insolvency Service found that he had allowed a company called Signature Works to distribute promotional material containing false and misleading information, costing investors over £4.8 million. Kenwright was accused of having "failed to ensure adequate stewardship and corporate governance".

More than 1,000 people invested in the Signature group, which had 21 developments including the Bill Shankly and Dixie Dean football-themed hotels in Liverpool and the George Best hotel in Belfast. Signature Living Hotel Limited entered administration in April 2020 owing £113 million.

Kenwright, 60, was also director of Signature Works Gold Limited, which sold desk space to investors in three Liverpool city centre properties. He is banned from acting as a company director for the next five years.

Signature Works was incorporated in 2017, and its marketing material implied that investors would gain a legal interest in the properties. In reality, it did not have any registered freehold or leasehold interest in the properties, which were owned by companies in which Kenwright was the sole shareholder.

When Signature Works was wound up in December 2022 it reported assets of less than £100,000 and liabilities of £4,848,654. Kenwright and his wife, Katie, were declared bankrupt in 2024.

The Serious Fraud Office and National Crime Agency carried out raids linked to the Signature group the following month. In July, the SFO said: "We have closed our investigation into Signature group as there is no longer a realistic prospect of conviction."

Expressly disbanding transport empire

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Robert Lea*

Phil White, the chairman of the National Express group Mobico, must feel like he's got a touch of the grand old duke of York.

This proud son of God's own county marched National Express up the hill back in the day, creating Britain's largest passenger transport company and a FTSE 100 stock to boot. But that was then.

Two decades after he left National Express to embark on a mixed journey in the world of non-executive boardroom sinecures, White returned nearly 18 months ago to rescue the company that in the meantime had changed its name to Mobico — the sort of rebranding that never augurs well. And now White is marching the business all the way back down the hill again, disbanding the empire he helped create. To last year's ignominious withdrawal from the US, White has added quitting the buses in the West Midlands (report, page 35).

Though it does little or nothing to repair Mobico's ragged finances, the decision makes sense as bus services in the mayoral region are to be let out in new franchises, none of which Mobico was guaranteed to win.

The sale of buses and depots to the combined local authority will be personal for White. It was the original deregulated West Midlands business where he cut his financial and commercial teeth and from which he began his ascent at National Express.

Add these retreats to the company's acrimonious exit from Britain's railways under a previous regime, and Mobico is left with a dysfunctional German rail business, a small legacy outpost in the US and the original National Express coach business in the UK, which is being taken to the cleaners by the insurgent Flixbus. The coach business is in such disarray that it has become a subsidiary of Mobico's core business, the successful Spanish coach and bus operations of Alsa.

The other thing left is the company's listing on the London Stock Exchange. With £1.5 billion of debt and the equity valued at just £160 million, this is looking like a curiosity. Most of Britain's other great deregulated passenger transport companies — Stagecoach, Arriva, Go-Ahead — have fallen into the hands of private equity. Mobico is 25 per cent controlled by the Madrid-based Cosmen family behind Alsa. An inquisition by the Spanish into why Mobico should remain listed will continue.

Tunnel vision

You wait nearly 40 years for a business to bust a Eurostar monopoly on cross-Channel high-speed train services, and then two come along at once.

Virgin Trains has been granted a licence to run 20 return services a day into and out of London St Pancras and through the Channel Tunnel to the Continent.

Trenitalia of Italy is coming down the same track and the Office of Rail and Road is expected to rubberstamp its similar application in the coming weeks. Virgin and Trenitalia services won't launch until 2029 at the earliest. Will it all be good for the consumer? More frequency would suggest so. But will fares come down? All three are planning full-service operations so it may all be a bit "me-too" and no sign of a Ryanair of the railways. Lower fares would need someone to start a price war and there may be no commercial imperative for that.

While there is plenty of spare capacity on the lines and through the tunnel, future passengers may more keenly feel the impact at the station. The space-constricted international terminal at St Pancras can already be a bit of a hellhole. Anyone familiar with the grand old building might wonder where all the extra passengers — and Eurostar is planning to expand too — will go. And the Eurostar terminal at Paris Gare du Nord does not exactly boast the wide open spaces of the Serengeti.

Exciting times for cross-Channel rail travellers but our top civil engineering brains will be wondering how the passenger-queueing quart gets poured into the pint-pot terminals.

Titanic overhaul

As structures go in symbolising a city, the giant yellow gantry cranes of the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast do a decent job. For many years, however, the cranes, named Samson and Goliath, have been emblematic of the city's industrial decline.

The latest outfit to promise the rejuvenation of Harland & Wolff is Navantia, the Spanish shipbuilder, which not only saw the chance to rescue from administration an historic dockyard but also the opportunity to fulfil a contract for producing supply ships for Britain's aircraft carriers and win future work for the Royal Navy.

The latest progress is an announcement today of a big overhaul of Samson and Goliath, now both in their sixth decade. None of which explains why the larger crane at 106 metres should continue to be called Samson when plainly it should be Goliath.

Defence dilemma

Dark days for Stevenage over the town's bioscience crisis as my colleague Alex Ralph details elsewhere on this page. This may not be the half of it. Stevenage is also home to Britain's military satellite industry, a heritage of Marconi and GEC, now under the Airbus UK badge which has its headquarters in the town. The Ministry of Defence is considering handing a £5 billion contract to build the next generation of sovereign Skynet communications technology to Lockheed Martin of the US, which would assemble the kit elsewhere. A decision has been delayed.

Stevenage is shaping up like it could be a four-way marginal at the next general election. Someone may have made the connection.

robert.lea@thetimes.co.uk
Alistair Osborne is away

Business

Personal insolvencies jump 14% as household debt pressures mount

James Hurley

The number of individuals entering insolvency in England and Wales was 14 per cent higher in July than a year ago, according to official figures.

The increase was driven by a rise in individual voluntary arrangements (IVA), an alternative to bankruptcy in which debtors make an agreement with their creditors.

With the exception of December 2025, which was affected by the clearing of a backlog of cases that had been agreed in previous months, the number of IVAs recorded in July reached the highest monthly number since November 2022. In the year to the end of July, one in 360 adults in England and Wales entered insolvency, a rate of 27.8 per 10,000 adults, compared with a rate of 24.3, or one in 412, a year ago.

Sonia Jordan, the president of R3, the insolvency trade body, said the figures underlined "the continued pressure on household finances".

She added: "Many households continue to struggle with debt and there is a clear need for effective support and breathing space. Government support such as the £150 energy bill discount and the freeze on bus fares will provide some relief. Recent figures showing a decline in mortgage arrears and repossessions are also encouraging, but financial pressures remain."

Debt relief orders (DRO), a way for people to drop personal debts they cannot pay where debts are worth less than £50,000 and they don't have many assets or spare income, dropped 4 per cent compared with a year ago. So far this year, their use remains at higher monthly average levels than last year. Following the removal of a fee for entering a DRO in April 2024, monthly numbers over the past two years have been higher than at any point since their introduction in 2009.

The number of "breathing space" registrations, a scheme that gives people temporary protection from creditors while they get debt advice and make a plan, was down 38 per cent compared with July 2025. The number of breathing spaces has been lower since December 2025 after the largest money adviser group by number of cases, StepChange, updated its suitability criteria.

The overall number of individual insolvencies in July was similar to June 2026. In the 12 months to July 31, 2026, 59 per cent of individual insolvencies were IVAs, 35 per cent were debt relief orders, and 6 per cent were bankruptcies. The long-term trend shows a decrease in the proportion of individual insolvencies that are bankruptcies, the Insolvency Service said.

IVA numbers in the first seven months of 2026 were 14 per cent higher than the 2025 monthly average. The number of IVAs has been rising since 2023 but remains below record numbers seen between 2018 and 2022.

Grocery inflation hits a two-year low

British grocery price inflation eased to its lowest level in almost two years this month as supermarkets stepped up discounting to lure in shoppers (Isabella Fish writes).

Like-for-like grocery inflation slowed to 2.1 per cent in August, the lowest level since October 2024, according to Worldpanel data. This compared with 2.6 per cent in the prior month and 3 per cent before that, offering more respite to households grappling with elevated living costs.

Sally Ball, at Worldpanel by Numerator, said it marked the fifth consecutive month of easing prices and shoppers were "feeling the relief".

The Worldpanel data offers an early indication of food pricing pressures for this month, before official inflation data due to be published today. UK food inflation has not reached the levels that were forecast earlier in the year thanks to stiff supermarket competition, hedging by suppliers, and shoppers' resistance to further price rises.

Andy Burnham has said helping households cope with rising costs is a priority while he is in power.

Ministers have promised to pursue companies suspected of taking advantage of shoppers. John Healey, the chancellor, has said the government will be "watching closely".

The latest Worldpanel data showed UK grocery sales increased by 2.5 per cent year-on-year of the four-week period.

Despite the further easing of price rises, spending returned to more normal levels after a boost last month. Shoppers spent £410 on groceries on average over the four weeks, £14.24 less than the last period. Many turned to promotions to keep costs down, with 31.3 per cent of sales including a deal last month — the highest level this year.

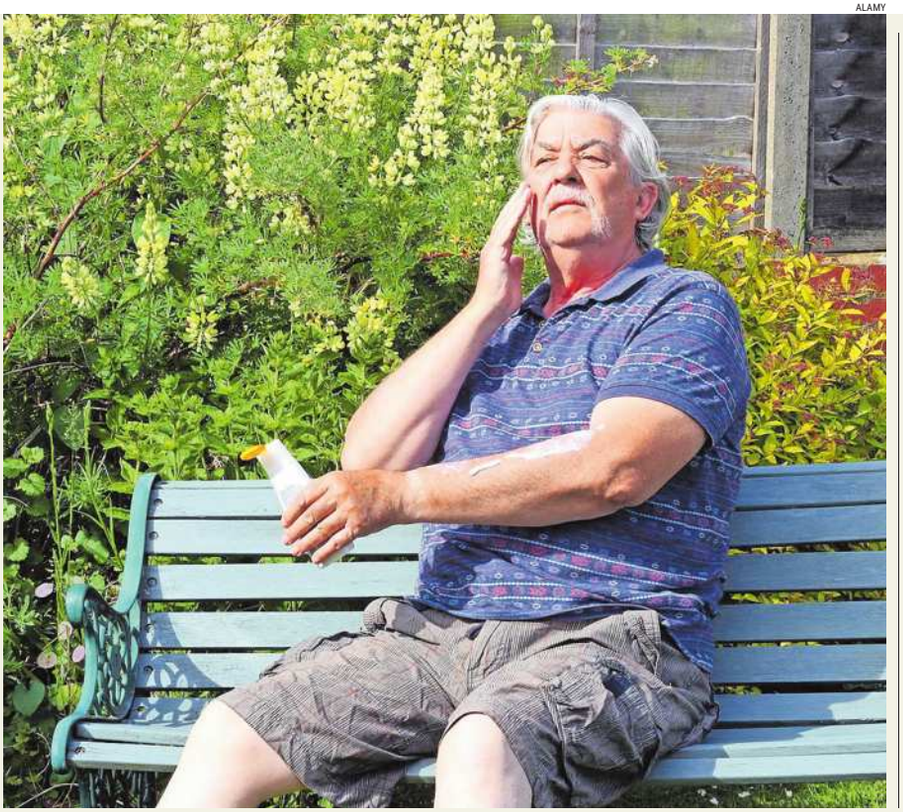
The hot weather drove a 58.4 per cent jump in sales of sun cream, with ice cream and sorbet sales up 26.1 per cent.

Tesco's sales rose 1.8 per cent year-on-year, but its market share edged lower for the third report in a row to 27.8 per cent. Sales at Sainsbury's, the number-two player, rose 3.5 per cent, while its market share edged up slightly to 15.2 per cent.

Lidl, the German discounter, gained the most market share, adding 0.5 per cent to take it to 8.8 per cent of the market. Sales at Aldi, its rival, rose 1.1 per cent despite another decline in market share.

While Marks & Spencer isn't fully included in the Worldpanel data set, it remained the UK's fastest-growing food retailer with a 15.9 per cent rise in sales of groceries.

ALAMY



Supermarket shoppers stocked up on sun cream during the heatwave as sales of ice cream and sorbet also soared

Slowing pay growth to keep rates steady

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The Bank of England is poised to keep interest rates on hold for the remainder of the year and then potentially cut them three times in 2027, analysts predicted after new data yesterday showed that pay growth fell to a six-year low and hiring remained sluggish.

The cost of borrowing is likely to be kept on hold despite persistent inflationary pressures caused by the war in the Middle East, which has sent global oil and gas prices on an upward spiral.

City analysts said that borrowing costs would remain at 3.75 per cent throughout the second half of the year before the Bank of England started lowering them in early 2027.

Bruna Skarica, chief UK economist at Morgan Stanley, the Wall Street investment bank, said that weakness in the jobs market was a "firm barrier" to persistently higher inflation embedding in the UK economy.

She said in a note to clients: "Our base case remains rates on hold until mid-next year, when energy base effects help push headline inflation towards 2 per cent, we think. We expect a cut then."

A lack of buoyancy in the workforce "should keep the [Bank] stuck on the sidelines for now", Sanjay Raja, chief UK economist at Deutsche Bank, the German investment bank, said.

Thomas Pugh, chief economist at RSM UK, said: "The labour market is continuing to move from deterioration to stabilisation, but workers won't feel much relief if wage growth stalls and living costs keep rising. However, it should give the Bank of England confidence to keep interest rates on hold for the rest of the year."

Ashley Webb, a senior UK economist at Capital Economics, said that "as long as the recent rise in energy prices doesn't go much further, we think the weak labour market will prevent second-round inflation effects", adding that rates could be lowered to 3 per cent next year from their present level of 3.75 per cent.

The predictions came after the Office for National Statistics said yesterday that private sector wage growth, closely watched by the central bank, slid to a six-year low and job vacancies fell to their lowest level since 2014 outside of the pandemic.

UK wage growth

Average earnings (year-on-year)

Regular pay excluding bonuses. Source: ONS

Unemployment held steady at 4.9 per cent in the three months to June but the rate of youth joblessness remained close to an 11-year high.

Tit-for-tat strikes between the United States and Iran over the past month have led to frequent spikes in global oil prices, with the cost of a barrel of Brent crude often touching $100 before easing back lower.

Little progress has been made to seal a lasting peace agreement that fully reopens the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping artery through which a fifth of the world's oil travelled before the beginning of the conflict nearly six months ago.

Data published by the ONS today is expected to show that inflation climbed to 2.9 per cent on an annual basis in July from 2.6 per cent in the previous month, led higher by the 13 per cent increase in the Ofgem price cap.

The Bank of England predicted at its last interest rate meeting in July that inflation would exceed 4 per cent, more than double its 2 per cent target, if there was another escalation in hostilities between the US and Iran that pushed oil prices above $100 over the long term.

In July, the central bank's monetary policy committee voted 6-3 in favour of leaving borrowing costs at 3.75 per cent. The three members who wanted to raise interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point were concerned that workers would demand steep pay increases to compensate for the rising cost of living, thereby pushing inflation higher.

Huw Pill, the Bank of England's chief economist, said at the time: "I remain concerned about more insidious second-round effects driven by catch-up dynamics in wage and price setting. While these may be slower to emerge, they could prove more lasting and create greater intrinsic inflation persistence."

However, Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England, said after the announcement of the latest rate hold: "Please do not leave this room thinking that the Bank of England is edging towards a hike."

Graham Ruddick

Ferrari has a lesson for Infantino: bigger does not always mean better

Enzo Ferrari was a demanding and difficult person to work with. He was obsessed with the craft of making cars and every minor detail of the vehicle. "I have yet to meet anyone quite so stubborn as myself and animated by this overpowering passion that leaves me no time for thought or anything else," he said. Ferrari had another principle that continues to define the business. "Ferrari will always deliver one car less than the market demands," he said.

Ferrari has a market value today of roughly $80 billion, more than Ford, General Motors and Volkswagen. But in 2025 it sold just 13,640 cars. Furthermore, about 80 per cent of the cars it sells each year are reserved for customers who already own one. That means Ferrari only gets a couple of thousand new customers each year.

Owning a Ferrari puts you in an extraordinary and exclusive club. This has the consequence of protecting the value of any Ferrari car out in the market. In fact, the cars actually increase in value. This happened at the annual Monterey Car Week in California last week, where there were auctions involving Ferraris. They sold at a 58 per cent premium to their estimated price and 88 per cent up on the 2025 auction.

These sales included an all-electric Luce, which was only launched this year, selling for $40 million. That is well above the retail price of €550,000 and the pre-sale estimates for the auction of $1.2 million. The Luce, which was designed with the former Apple executive Sir Jony Ive, has been controversial and the design got a mixed response when it was unveiled. But the one sold at Monterey, which had the chassis number 0, was a "remarkable success", analysts at Jefferies said.

This is not a one-off either. "The remarkable outcomes at this year's Monterey are to be added to the notable progress in second-hand prices for range cars which we are observing in the US," the analysts said.

Putting a product into the world that increases in value is something of a holy grail for a business. Ferrari has produced only 330,000 cars since it was founded in 1929. According to the company, more than 90 per cent of these are still in existence and require constant care.

ALAMY

Enzo Ferrari in the 1920s. He has found a way of protecting the value of his cars

This is the business version of compound interest — of value being added every day to something you did long ago. "Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world," Albert Einstein said. "He who understands it, earns it. He who doesn't, pays it."

Many readers will know that compound interest is something that Warren Buffett is obsessed about when it comes to looking for businesses to invest in. "Time is the friend of the wonderful company, the enemy of the mediocre," he has said.

The Sage of Omaha has even spoken about compound interest in relation to the importance of reading and human knowledge. "Read 500 pages like this every day," he told a group of students in 2000. "That's how knowledge works. It builds up, like compound interest. All of you can do it, but I guarantee not many of you will do it."

The final part of that quote hints at why compound interest is difficult to find — it takes great discipline. For example, Ferrari has achieved it not just by building high-quality cars, but by having the discipline to stick with limited production runs when it could have given in to the short-term demands of investors to increase revenues. It needed a founder with the obsession and control of Enzo Ferrari.

Another business that has enjoyed compound interest, albeit in a different form, is Disney. It creates new intellectual property with its films and then sees it deliver revenue for years, through VHS and DVD sales, merchandise, visits to its theme parks and more.

The latest episode of the *Acquired* podcast, which tells the story behind modern companies, has analysed Disney and found that since 1997 *The Lion King* musical has grossed more than $11 billion worldwide. That makes the musical one of the most successful media productions of all time across any format. And it was a spin-off from a film that Disney released in 1994.

Buffett actually bought into Disney in 1966 because he spotted the opportunity for the company to get long-term value from its assets. "It's like having an oilfield where you pump out all the oil and sell it. And then it all seeps back in over seven or eight years," he said of Disney's model. Buffett sold his stake in Disney for around $6 million a year later, making a 50 per cent profit. But he has since described that decision to sell as "huge mistake". A 5 per cent stake in Disney today is worth around $9 billion.

However, Disney has tested the limits of this model and not had the discipline of Ferrari. Any fan of Marvel or Star Wars, which are owned by Disney, would tell you that the company has pumped out far too many movies and TV shows, diluting the scarcity value. When Bob Iger returned to Disney as chief executive in 2022, one of the first things he did was to cut back the company's output. "I've been working hard with the studio to reduce output and focus more on quality," he told analysts.

In a world of streaming and abundant choice, that is a difficult path for a media company to take. We are in a world where bigger and faster is seen as better. Where the first reaction to something being successful is to demand more, not revel in its unique brilliance. Just look at Gianni Infantino and Fifa trying to expand the football World Cup to 64 teams, having only just expanded it from 32 to 48.

Yet as Ferrari shows, there is another way. There is actually evidence that consumers don't want more anyway. *The Paradox of Choice* by psychologist Barry Schwartz was published in 2004 and laid out how an abundance of options can leave people feeling unsatisfied, exhausted and doubting whether they have done the right thing. In 2011, Steve Jobs said: "A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them. That's why a lot of people at Apple get paid a lot of money, because they're supposed to be on top of these things." Jobs, like Ferrari, was obsessed with the craft behind his product. It served Apple and Ferrari well.

Graham Ruddick is Deputy Business Editor of The Times

Government spending on technology lifts Kainos

Helen Cahill

Kainos Group has upgraded its outlook for revenues and profit after benefiting from strong government demand for digital services.

The IT provider said profits and revenues would be "comfortably ahead" of City expectations after it delivered "very strong sales performance and record backlog levels", prompting its shares to gain 213½p, or 21.9 per cent, to close at £11.86.

The FTSE 250 company, based in Belfast, develops software for business and helps clients adopt the Workday platform, which manages payroll, finance and day-to-day tasks. The company operates in over 22 countries and employs more than 3,000 people globally. Almost half of its revenues come from international operations.

Its shares were caught in the sell-off in February when Anthropic released AI products that left many questioning the worth of established software players. Yet, Kainos's shares have been recovering, partly on the back of reports that Silver Lake, the private equity firm, had held discussions over a possible acquisition of Workday.

Kainos said its performance was primarily driven by its digital services division after it secured "several significant contracts" to develop customised software products for its clients. The group reported double-digit revenue increases in the divisions focused on servicing and selling Workday's HR products.

"We remain confident in our outlook for the financial year and beyond. This confidence is underpinned by a robust pipeline and a significant multi-year contracted backlog," Kainos said.

Analysts at Peel Hunt raised their forecasts for Kainos's annual revenues by 7 per cent to £545 million after the company's trading update and predicted profit before tax would increase by 28.9 per cent to £74.9 million.

They said: "Major UK public sector contracts are ramping faster than expected. Importantly, management highlighted that Kainos is not simply winning more work, but is increasingly securing larger contracts.

"The announcement also supports a broader positive view on UK public sector technology spending ... taken together, the recent newsflow suggests that UK government digital transformation budgets remain healthy and that vendors such as Kainos, with proven delivery capability, are winning larger, more strategic programmes."

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THE TIMES
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BHP

BHP's Olympic Dam Mine in South Australia has significant deposits of copper

BHP profits boosted by high demand for copper

Martin Strydom

The world's largest listed miner reported better-than-expected full-year results boosted by demand for copper, which accounted for more than half of its profits for the first time.

BHP said strong commodity prices and record iron ore shipments cleared the way for its biggest final dividend payout in four years.

Underlying attributable profit rose 30 per cent to $13.2 billion for the year to the end of June, up from $10.2 billion last year and higher than the $12.9 billion forecast by analysts.

Brandon Craig, who took over as chief executive last month, said: "Copper, iron, steelmaking coal and potash are foundational to the way the world is developing. That is why we are moving as fast as we can and bringing these commodities to market."

The miner said copper accounted for more than half of underlying profits for the first time in the company's history, generating sufficient free cashflow to make the group's expansion plans in the metal entirely self-funding. It expected to be able to boost its copper production by as much as 40 per cent by 2035, supported by a pipeline of projects across Chile, Australia and Argentina.

Copper demand is being driven by a pivot towards the metal as the world moves to cleaner energy. Craig projected global copper consumption to surge from 34 million tonnes annually to more than 50 million tonnes by 2050. He said China was investing heavily in its electricity grid, there was demand from companies building AI data centres, electric car makers and renewable energy projects in the United States, and infrastructure expansion in India.

Copper prices hit highs above $14,000 per metric tonne this year, fuelled by AI chipmakers building energy-hungry data centres. BHP's rival, Rio Tinto, also reported greater demand for metals used to meet electricity demand. In its first-half results in July, profits from copper, aluminium and lithium combined surpassed iron ore earnings for the first time.

Copper was also a key driver in Rio Tinto and Glencore's talks in January over a $260 billion merger to create the world's largest mining company. They later walked away from a deal after failing to agree terms.

Copper, including byproducts such as gold and uranium, generated $18.19 billion in operating earnings in the year, outstripping BHP's traditionally strong iron ore division. Western Australia Iron Ore had record production and shipments, generating $14.67 billion in operating earnings in the year, up 2 per cent from last year and in line with market forecasts of $14.75 billion.

$13.2bn
Underlying profit for year to the end of June, up 30 per cent on last year
Source: BHP

Craig said the company's Jansen potash project in Saskatchewan, Canada, is expected to begin production in the middle of next year.

BHP announced a final dividend of 99 cents a share, bringing the full-year payout to $1.72, the highest in four years. Shares in the company rose 3 per cent in Australia. BHP dropped out of the FTSE 100 after moving its main listing to Australia in 2022, keeping a standard listing in London.

Craig scotched reports that BHP could review its Queensland metallurgical coal operations for a possible sale over the next one to five years. He said the assets would be an important part of BHP's portfolio if markets developed as the miner expected.

Andy Forster of Argo Investments in Sydney, which holds BHP shares, said: "Loved the dividend, a big beat on that. Solid overall, and copper doing all the work."

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Poundland owner explores sale of ailing discount chain

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

The owner of Poundland is exploring a sale of the struggling discount retailer just over a year after it bought the business for £1.

Gordon Brothers, a Boston-based restructuring firm, is said to be in talks about launching a sale process for the company after buying it in June 2025.

The retailer has not started an official sale process but is expected to proceed with one in the coming weeks, according to Sky News, which first reported the development.

Poundland was sold for £1 in June last year to Gordon Brothers, marking the exit of its Warsaw-listed owner Pepco Group after nine years and the closure of about 200 shops.

The discounter has struggled with a mix of strategic missteps and external pressures, including the shift away from its single-price model, rising costs and intensifying competition from discount rivals and online import platforms such as Temu and Shein.

The company came close to administration last year before securing High Court approval for its restructuring plan, which included store closures, cutting some rents to zero and reducing others. The restructuring programme, which completed this year, resulted in the closure of nearly 150 stores and the loss of about 2,200 jobs across the business. It now operates 651 sites compared with roughly 800 before the reorganisation. Staff numbers have fallen from 14,200 to about 12,000.

In January this year, Barry Williams, its managing director, said that despite considerable progress, the retailer recognised it still had "much to do" in its recovery efforts.

Poundland had started introducing more items priced above and below £1 to diversify its range. However, management recently admitted this was a mistake. Under its turnaround plan, the company has priced its food products at £1, £2 or £3, with about 60 per cent of grocery items priced at £1. It has also decided to bring back its in-house Pep&Co clothing brand to its UK and Ireland stores.

The UK discount sector thrived during the pandemic and at the beginning of the cost of living crisis, benefiting from shoppers trading down to cheaper groceries and non-food items. However, even as inflation eases, high street budget chains like Poundland, Primark, B&M European Value Retail have struggled with shrinking profit margins, store closures, online competition and rising operational expenses.

The business was founded by Dave Dodd and Steven Smith in 1990, originally selling all its items at the single price of £1. Gordon Brothers was contacted for comment.

GETTY IMAGES; JANE BARLOW/PA

The Glen Rosa ferry is finally nearing completion at the Ferguson Marine shipyard in Port Glasgow eight years on from its original schedule

Ferguson Marine to slash shipyard jobs

Scotland's state-owned shipyard is set to cut up to a quarter of its total workforce while it waits for the second of two long-delayed and overbudget CalMac ferries (Charlotte Bend writes).

Ferguson Marine has begun a voluntary redundancy programme at Port Glasgow, Inverclyde, which is expected to lead to the departure of up to 70 employees as the shipyard awaits completion of the MV Glen Rosa in the final quarter of 2026, eight years on from its original schedule.

The announcement yesterday said the redundancies were part of the company's transition between completing its current order book and starting work on a new phase of shipbuilding contracts. Each individual accepted for the voluntary redundancy will receive £1,000 per completed year of service, up to a maximum of £10,000, on top of their statutory entitlement, according to Ferguson.

The shipyard employs 247 core staff and 31 agency staff, which will reduce as the vessel nears completion, as well as 32 apprentices. The company said its workload was "naturally reducing" as it moved into the final outfitting and commissioning phases of the Glen Rosa, which has been built for CalMac's Arran route.

At the start of the year, Graeme Thomson, chief executive of Ferguson, estimated the cost of finishing the dual-fuel ferry had increased by £7 million, bringing the total to £192 million, rising to £197.5 million when allowing a contingency for potential risks. It recently emerged that part of the delay was due to the need to draft in experts to install and fill Glen Rosa's cleaner liquified natural gas (LNG) tank before it could carry passengers.

It follows the MV Glen Sannox, which was launched in 2017 by Nicola Sturgeon, the former first minister, featuring half-built, painted-on windows. After entering service in January 2025, it has been withdrawn for repairs several times and it was revealed in June that the ferry had been running on diesel due to problems with its cleaner LNG system.

The roll-on, roll-off vehicle passenger ferries were designed to be capable of operating on LNG and marine gas oil, with the former being cleaner and having been adopted by ferry operators in northern Europe in response to tighter emissions regulations. Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited commissioned the vessels from Ferguson Marine in 2015 after climate change duties were imposed on public bodies in 2011 to help the Scottish government to meet its net zero deadline of 2045.

Thomson said of the redundancies that the company faced a "gap in workload" as the Glen Rosa neared completion and therefore it was taking proactive steps to protect the "long-term viability of the yard".

Ferguson Marine said the redundancy process would have no impact on the remaining work or delivery schedule for MV Glen Rosa.

Mobico is off the buses after West Midlands deal

Guy Taylor

The transport company behind National Express has agreed a £24 million deal to sell its last remaining UK bus operations, bringing them into public hands after more than three decades.

Mobico announced plans yesterday to offload its West Midlands bus business to the West Midlands Combined Authority, which comprises local councils including Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Solihull.

The deal was welcomed by Andy Burnham, who said it was "just the start" of his devolution agenda and would mean "better, more affordable" services for the region.

"When I said we would put power back in the hands of local communities, this is exactly what I was talking about," the prime minister said.

Richard Parker, mayor of the West Midlands, said: "People rely on these buses to get to work, to school or to hospital appointments ... and I believe they should be run in the public interest."

Parker has been pioneering the region's shift towards a bus franchising model, which was approved last year by the local authority and is expected to be complete by the end of 2029. Decisions on fares, timetables and routes will be handled by Transport for West Midlands.

The deal with Mobico secures thousands of jobs but spells the end of the company's directly controlled bus operations in the UK. Its coach business under the National Express name remains, however, and it will continue to pursue bus franchising opportunities.

Mobico first entered the market in 1995 with the acquisition of West Midlands Travel, which was one of the country's largest bus companies. Today, the business encompasses 1,400 buses across the West Midlands region with an estimated 210 million passenger journeys completed each year.

Phil White, executive chairman of Mobico, said the division had been operating at break-even for a number of years and that the "uncertainty of future franchising in the area presented a significant headwind for the group".

While its assets were valued at £102 million, comprising primarily UK bus depots and diesel fleet, the transfer of liabilities including pension deficits means the proceeds will be far lower. "The transaction represents fair value for the assets and liabilities of UK Bus while providing certainty for our colleagues upon completion," White said.

The deal will be backed by £11.5 million in government funding over the next three years and also includes an additional deferred consideration of £5.5 million for Mobico, half of which will be payable at the end of 2027 and the rest at the end of 2029.

"The transaction significantly derisks the group from the potential to lose market share in the ... franchising process, crystallises value for its assets today broadly in line with book value, whilst providing a clean transfer of the group's operations, employees, cost base and other liabilities," Mobico said.

The former FTSE 100 constituent has endured a torrid period since the pandemic. Its shares plummeted by more than 90 per cent and its market valuation has been reduced to about £160 million. One of the few bright spots has been Alsa, its Spanish bus and coach business, although this has not been enough to offset substantial debts and a litany of difficulties in countries from Germany to the United States.

A central problem has been fierce competition from Flix, a German upstart that has challenged National Express's near-monopoly on intercity travel in Britain.

Shares in Mobico closed down 1p, or 4.2 per cent, at 25¼p.

Klarna's unexpected profit eclipsed by German gloom

Ben Martin Financial Editor

Klarna spooked investors yesterday after the Swedish "buy now, pay later" services provider and online bank cut its full-year volume and revenue forecast yesterday, citing conditions in Germany, its largest market.

The guidance overshadowed Klarna's surprise second-quarter profit, when analysts had expected a net loss, helped by growth in its US markets.

The Swedish business, which listed in New York last September, said in its second-quarter results that it was taking a "more measured view" of Germany — its biggest market by volumes — prompting it to cut its revenue guidance for the year from $4.34 billion to a range of $4.08 billion to $4.16 billion.

The disappointing downgrade eclipsed an unexpected profit in the quarter and investors sent Klarna shares down by 21.3 per cent to $15.33 by midday yesterday to leave it valued at less than $6 billion. That compares with the $15 billion valuation clinched by Klarna in last year's float that priced its shares at $40 each.

After the IPO, Klarna shares quickly lost ground, with investor sentiment towards the business not helped by rising bad loan provisions at the group.

It said that it was overhauling part of its top team, with Niclas Neglen, who has been its finance chief for six years and played a central role in its flotation, and David Sandstrom, its chief marketing officer since 2017, both set to leave in early 2027. Sebastian Siemiatkowski, the lender's boss and co-founder, said the pair had "helped shape what Klarna is". The hunt for a New York-based successor to Neglen is under way, the business added.

The executive changes come amid a wider revamp of the group, which is growing beyond its "buy now, pay later" offering into other areas such as debit cards and savings accounts. Last month Klarna applied for a US banking licence.

In a fillip for investors rattled by the revenue guidance cut, Klarna swung to a net profit of $9 million for the three months to the end of June, up from a $53 million loss a year earlier. The stock market had been expecting the business, which eked out a $1 million profit in the first quarter, to fall back into the red in the second.

A 27 per cent year-on-year rise in revenues to $1.04 billion during the latest three-month period also surpassed analyst expectations. Revenue per active customer increased by 24 per cent and it said it was used by more than 120 million consumers in the past 12 months, an increase of 9 million on the year.

Klarna said its more cautious view on Germany was "consistent with reported trend across German retail".

Business

The Times unit trust information service

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	129.63		-0.40	8.09
UK Equity A ‡	397.45		-1.42	3.97
UK Growth ‡	10341.31		-46.77	2.23

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
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Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡383.8			-2.65	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡215.83			-1.49	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	230.29		-0.32	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	66.9		-0.11	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	802.85		-2.95	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	307.72		-1.13	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.56		-0.32	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡901.45			-4.24	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡698.22			-4.42	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡4293.58			-18.31	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	95.1		+0.07	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.31		-0.21	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.58		-0.1	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.11		-0.2	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.45		-0.09	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1337.73		-11.73	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2344.06		-9.51	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1102.63		-6.54	...

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3370		...	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2128		-3.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	329.9		-2.40	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	235.2		-0.60	1.10

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	295.8		-0.97	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1023		-0.78	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	874		-0.47	1.69
UK Income ‡@	257.3		-0.16	3.83

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5731.83		...	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1606		-23	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	593.3		-2.4	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	402.3		-2.6	...
Strategic Bd ‡	228.5		-0.4	3.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	494.9		-3.20	1.85
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡@	460.8		-3.30	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡@	141.2		-0.60	4.01
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡@84.87			-0.23	4.97
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	253.4		-2.00	1.74
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	328		-0.70	1.46

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2926		...	...
American ‡	8057		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	738.3		...	0.48
European ‡	4417		...	0.77
Global Focus ‡	3715		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡22.36			...	6.39
Global Special Sits ‡	8981		...	...
Japan ‡	997.3		...	0.33
Moneyblder Bal ‡	48.36		...	0.61
Moneyblder Inc ‡	28.13		...	5.04
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	200.73		...	2.50
Special Sits ‡	7500		...	1.65

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡105.6			...	1.43

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.19		...	4.70
Intl Gwth ‡	216.2		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	107.8		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	119.9		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
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HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1636		-5	0.77
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1849		-15	2.29
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1071		-9	2.34
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	437.6		-1.7	2.51
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	177.6		-0.7	2.67
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	409.8		-2.9	2.87
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	222.2		-1.6	2.86
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1102		-5	2.68
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	496.0		-2.2	2.82
Japan Ind Acc ‡	236.8		-2.9	1.43
Japan Ind Inc ‡	171.8		-2.1	1.47
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1075		-9	1.54
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	608.2		-5.1	1.56

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	310.7		-0.9	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	398.5		...	3.34
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@223.1			-1.1	3.01
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@86.46			-0.42	3.08

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡1260			-4	0.76

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Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	230.52		...	4.09
High Income Dis ‡	428.38		...	3.18
Income & Growth Dis ‡	501.71		...	3.12
Income Inc ‡	1654.3		...	2.88
Money Acc ‡	107.92		...	3.64
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92		...	5.74
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1387.19		...	1.48
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1365.32		...	1.20

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
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OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	869.97		-10.39	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡469.69			-1.44	2.62
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡269.11			-0.9	2.49
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡330.57			-2.65	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	121.65		-0.98	0.95
Diversified Income A Acc ‡376.03			-0.55	3.79
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.72		-0.09	5.21
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡144.1			-0.18	5.98
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡66.75			-0.08	7.68
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡293.28			-1.61	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡1235.33			-17.25	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	299.99		-3.09	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	397.86		-7.37	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡2104.38			-13.12	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	577.5		+7.93	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡530.99			-7.09	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡407.36			-5.44	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡2732.47			-33.12	1.03
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡939.72			-11.39	1.04

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.2		...	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	99.51		...	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡355.5			...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	152.6		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1321		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡304.4			...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3229		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.15		...	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6656		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡88.08			...	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7106		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡177.7358			...	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	188		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	336.2		-3.6	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	162.6		...	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡232.9			...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	228.8		...	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.27		...	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.43		...	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.7		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	199.7		...	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3070		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@706.1000			-2.7000	2.53

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	124.18		-0.7034	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	599.44		-1.1303	0.71
European ‡	3989.38		-1.1420	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1362.42		-0.7010	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡425.64			-0.9817	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	345.31		-0.6088	2.26

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	831.22		-0.7755	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	469.45		-0.3969	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	608.4		-0.7750	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡292.45			-0.2030	1.75
UK Growth ‡	281.55		-0.4118	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1008.33		-0.6812	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	811.1		-6.8	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡	484.3		-4.1	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡	149.7		-0.5	4.60
Fixed Int Dist ‡	61.89		-0.17	4.60
Global Health ‡	125.4		+2.2	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	235.8		-4.9	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.5		-0.1	5.70
Japan Ind Acc ‡	113.5		-1.6	1.20
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	423.3		-3.9	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	535.5		-2.1	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	231.8		-0.9	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1418		-11	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	471		-2.7	0.90

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1897.41		-0.1258027161	5.14

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	822.9		-0.2364066194	5.11
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	66.61		-0.4185976977	4.41
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.84		-0.1253446979	6.24
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.05		-0.4923682915	1.57
Index Trckr Inc ‡	104.03		-0.4021062709	3.02
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.34		-0.0788643533	4.26
UK Select A Inc ‡	3271.6		-0.6821348666	2.65

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.61		-0.397067807	5.05
Dividend Inc ‡	66.22		-0.25606266	5.40
Recovery A Inc ‡	141.05		-0.7808103545	2.88
Sml Cos Inc ‡	363.51		-0.4027617952	2.82

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡160.42			-0.6687306502	3.82

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.23		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.6		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	715.8		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	322		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	480.9		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1100.1		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1347		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	749.6		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1092.78		...	4.37
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1721.43		...	4.33
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1155.22		...	4.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡14014.83			...	0.33
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡1622.81			...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡1729.76			...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡3769.53			...	0.33
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡1533.13			...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡1494.47			...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡1535.78			...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡1527.75			...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡1552.03			...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.01		...	4.90
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	97.66		...	4.92
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1375.24		...	4.75
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3046.55		...	4.75
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2436.67		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1466.45		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2565.42		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1518.27		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	235.8		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	651.0		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	312.6		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1384.1400	1460.8300	-10.25	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	600.5		-1.30	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	273.3		-0.60	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	327.8		-0.80	4.20
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	107.5		-0.30	4.20
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	468.6		-1.90	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	300.2		-0.50	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.73		-0.12	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	558.4		-1.90	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	151.2		-0.50	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	228.2		-0.50	4.60
Strat In A Inc ‡@	85.97		-0.18	4.60
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	135.5		-0.30	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	665.3		-1.40	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	271.8		-0.50	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	132.3		-0.30	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.28		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.01		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.4		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	297.8		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	202.6		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	267		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.9		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.12		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	524.9		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	258.8		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	815.6		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	186.53		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	157.86		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.16		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.32		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	498.65		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	436.28		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	492.41		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	319.03		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡39.3914			-3.96	...
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡100.7724			-40.21	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡54.635			-16.8	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡54.5305			-16.82	...
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡39.2958			-14.49	...
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡41.7383			-8.17	...
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡118.4517			-47.09	...
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡111.516			-40.71	...
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡248.5403			-102.09	...
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡88.9712			-41.91	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡166.2745			-66.95	...
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡408.1072			-169.8	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis @993.1	993.1		...	1.23

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	63.53	– .12	0.79	2.57
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	56.67	– .06	0.44	2.57
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.83	+ .10	0.13	0.21
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.77	+ .11	0.13	0.60
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	96.21	+ .17	0.13	0.91
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.64	+ .07	0.15	1.89
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.47	+ .15	0.16	2.18
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.71	+ .09	0.17	2.29
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	66.77	+ .06	0.19	2.46
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.09	– .06	0.20	2.52
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.29	– .17	0.21	2.56
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	49.85	– .18	0.25	2.50
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	48.87	– .12	0.26	2.46
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	43.57	– .18	0.29	2.32
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	42.46	– .17	0.29	2.27
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	43.69	– .19	0.29	1.98
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	94.19	+ .15	0.80	1.56
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.03	– .11	1.06	2.52
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	51.56	– .12	0.73	2.41
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.13	+ .15	0.77	2.24
84.28	76.40	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	76.71	+ .04	0.81	2.36
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.47	+ .06	1.23	0.08
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	100.24	+ .20	1.25	1.21
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	73.96	– .12	1.69	2.55
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	73.50	– .14	1.70	2.54
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.80	+ .07	1.19	1.75
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.34	+ .14	1.23	1.99
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.58	+ .07	1.81	2.07
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	88.60	– .22	2.12	2.53
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.85	+ .38	0.83	1.70
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	343.11	+ .51	1.20	0.76

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	21.99	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.31	+ nc	2.24	5.54
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ⅞% 51	55.60	– .10	0.22	2.57
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.13	– .11	1.89	5.81
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	41.20	– .12	3.64	5.87
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	39.89	– .17	3.13	5.87
33.04	27.34	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	27.37	– .03	4.11	5.38
48.44	41.83	Tr 1 ¾% 57	41.92	– .12	4.17	5.82
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	42.04	– .12	3.87	5.85
41.45	35.52	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	35.55	– .01	4.57	5.51
57.14	49.72	Tr 2 ½% 65	49.82	– .12	5.02	5.74
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	64.82	– .16	5.40	5.72
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	72.52	– .17	5.17	5.82
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	71.67	– .17	5.23	5.84
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	78.03	– .18	5.45	5.82
83.52	73.28	Tr 4% 60	73.58	– .15	5.44	5.80

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.22	– .08	0.31	4.53
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.53	– .07	0.44	4.48
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.52	– .09	0.91	5.04
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	76.84	– .07	1.14	4.84
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	43.29	– .15	2.02	5.76
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	48.25	– .18	3.11	5.80
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	56.53	– .15	2.21	5.52
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	61.99	– .14	1.81	5.35
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	70.99	– .13	2.47	5.24
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	49.47	– .14	3.54	5.81
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.49	– .05	1.21	4.68
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	75.03	– .17	4.66	5.71
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.61	– .08	3.55	4.78
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	73.28	– .15	4.44	5.69
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	86.81	– .16	4.32	5.30
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.19	– .11	4.63	4.93
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	96.50	– .10	4.66	5.01
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	88.40	– .18	5.09	5.59
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	97.92	– .07	4.34	4.66
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	95.53	– .10	4.45	4.94
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	93.61	– .15	4.54	5.10
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	89.40	– .19	4.75	5.39
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	88.00	– .18	4.83	5.47
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	82.30	– .19	5.16	5.74
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	80.54	– .19	5.28	5.78
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.06	– .08	4.21	4.60
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.29	– .09	4.28	4.79
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	100.96	– .08	4.70	4.50
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	97.65	– .14	4.86	5.07
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	94.82	– .19	5.01	5.33
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.47	– .07	4.40	4.54
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	89.94	– .20	4.86	5.44
100.37	99.69	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	99.66	– .11	4.64	4.69
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	95.31	– .15	4.85	5.21
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	97.87	– .15	4.98	5.15
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	97.58	– .22	5.38	5.49
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	93.70	– .20	5.74	5.82

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.14	– .04	0.55	4.35
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.45	– .01	0.13	4.11
99.46	96.16	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.43	+ .02	0.38	3.66
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.56	– .04	0.98	4.44
97.43	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.37	+ .01	1.28	4.22
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.43	– .03	1.72	4.33
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.75	– .04	4.05	4.49
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	99.97	– .01	4.25	4.27
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	99.02	– .04	4.17	4.49
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.03	+ .01	4.12	4.02
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.01	– .01	4.37	4.37
107.15	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.69	– .04	5.79	4.30

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Frasers tightens grip on Hugo Boss but falls short of control

Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

Mike Ashley's Frasers Group has tightened its grip on Hugo Boss but not by enough to take control of the German fashion house.

In a brief stock exchange statement, Frasers said that 17.6 per cent of investors had accepted its takeover offer, taking its stake to nearly 48 per cent.

The owner of Sports Direct launched a £1.7 billion bid for Hugo Boss last month, part of a recent dealmaking spree that has included the acquisition of Harvey Nichols, the luxury department store chain, and a takeover offer for Accent, the Australian owner of The Athlete's Foot shoe brand.

Frasers, which is well-known for its aggressive corporate tactics, has spent the past few years building its stake in Hugo Boss and increasing efforts to exert influence over the brand, which it stocks in its Flannels and Frasers shops. This has included threatening to vote against future dividend payments and successfully pushing for a seat for Michael Murray, its chief executive and Ashley's son-in-law, on the German fashion label's supervisory board.

Frasers' takeover offer for Hugo Boss was lowball, voluntary and lacked a "minimum acceptance threshold", according to leading analysts, suggesting it was "seeking optionality rather than necessarily full control". Submitting a voluntary offer allowed the group to build its stake beyond 30 per cent without being forced into a mandatory bid, which would be required under German takeover rules.

Ashley, however, might need more than 50 per cent if, as has been reported, he is hoping to install Murray as chief executive. Sources told The Times last month that Frasers was laying the ground for Murray to take up the role, a move that would follow a signature playbook deployed by the retailer.

Hugo Boss had urged shareholders to reject the €38 per share bid, which it claimed undervalued the brand and was "inadequate".

Founded in 1924, the company is the largest premium fashion house in Germany, with global sales topping €4.2 billion. It is in the midst of a turnaround amid struggles with brand confusion, a global decline in demand for formalwear and a wider slowdown in the clothing market.

Nevertheless, Ashley has long been motivated by a desire to push Frasers more upmarket, despite making its name selling cut-price tracksuits and trainers through Sports Direct.

Last week Frasers secured a reported £40 million deal to acquire the struggling Harvey Nichols, which it hopes will help expand its relationships with luxury brands such as Moncler, Gucci and Burberry. Frasers also disclosed in July that it had increased its position in Burberry to 4.2 per cent, making it the third-largest shareholder in the company. Ashley stepped down as chief executive of Frasers in 2022 but remains the majority shareholder.

Frasers shares closed 14p higher, or 1.8 per cent, at 808½p, giving it a market valuation of about £3.5 billion. Profit before tax rose by 38.9 per cent to £527.8 million in the year ending April, largely because of a £117.7 million increase in premiums from investments.

Charles Allen, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, said the deal gave Frasers "a chance to demonstrate operating discipline at two troubled retailers and reset investor perceptions. Its low valuation, operational consistency and focus on cashflow remain strengths, while the extent of its involvement in Hugo Boss will test strategic intent".

ALAMY

The Metrocentre in Gateshead was the vision of Sir John Hall, below, a developer and president for life of Newcastle United

Landsec 'seeking cash' to buy Metrocentre

Land Securities may have to go cap in hand to shareholders for the first time in 17 years to fund its rumoured acquisition of one of Europe's biggest shopping centres, analysts have speculated (Tom Howard writes).

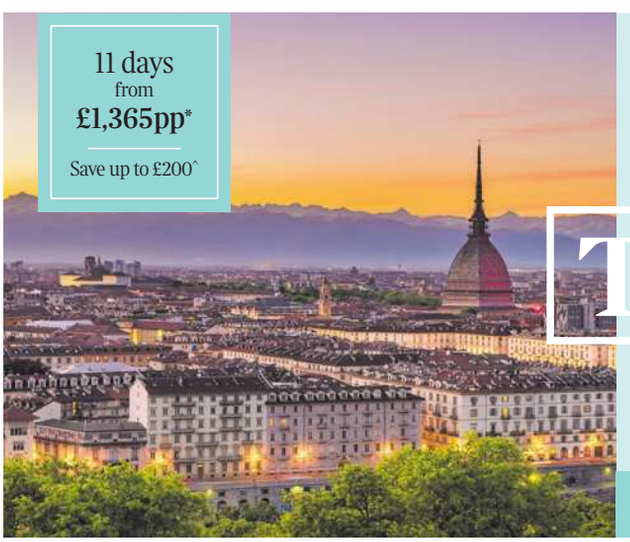
Reports have suggested that the FTSE 100 property group is close to agreeing a deal to buy the Metrocentre in Gateshead. The mall, which has more than 300 shops, cafés and restaurants, was put up for sale this year by the Metrocentre Partnership, which includes Singapore's sovereign wealth fund. It had been looking for £500 million, about half what the Metrocentre was valued at 20 years ago. However, analysts at Peel Hunt, the investment bank, think Landsec will end up paying "well in excess" of the asking price.

The Metrocentre was the vision of Sir John Hall, the son of a miner, who wanted to recreate the vast, shopping malls he had seen in Canada in the 1980s.

Of Landsec's near-£11 billion property portfolio, about £7 billion is offices in central London, with most of the rest in shopping centres, including Bluewater in Kent and Liverpool One.

Last year, Mark Allan, the chief executive, set out a new strategy in which Landsec expands its retail division and ventures into rental homes. To fund that pivot, the company has been selling off offices, although the sales have dried up. There has only been one office disposal over the summer — the £63 million sale of a block next to Liverpool Street station in London.

Matt Saperia, an analyst at Peel Hunt, thinks Landsec will have to consider an equity fundraising for the Metrocentre. Allan said this year he was open to an equity raise "if it's [for] something that is the right quality of asset and it is growing earnings". Shares in the firm closed down 19p, or 2.7 per cent, at 686p.



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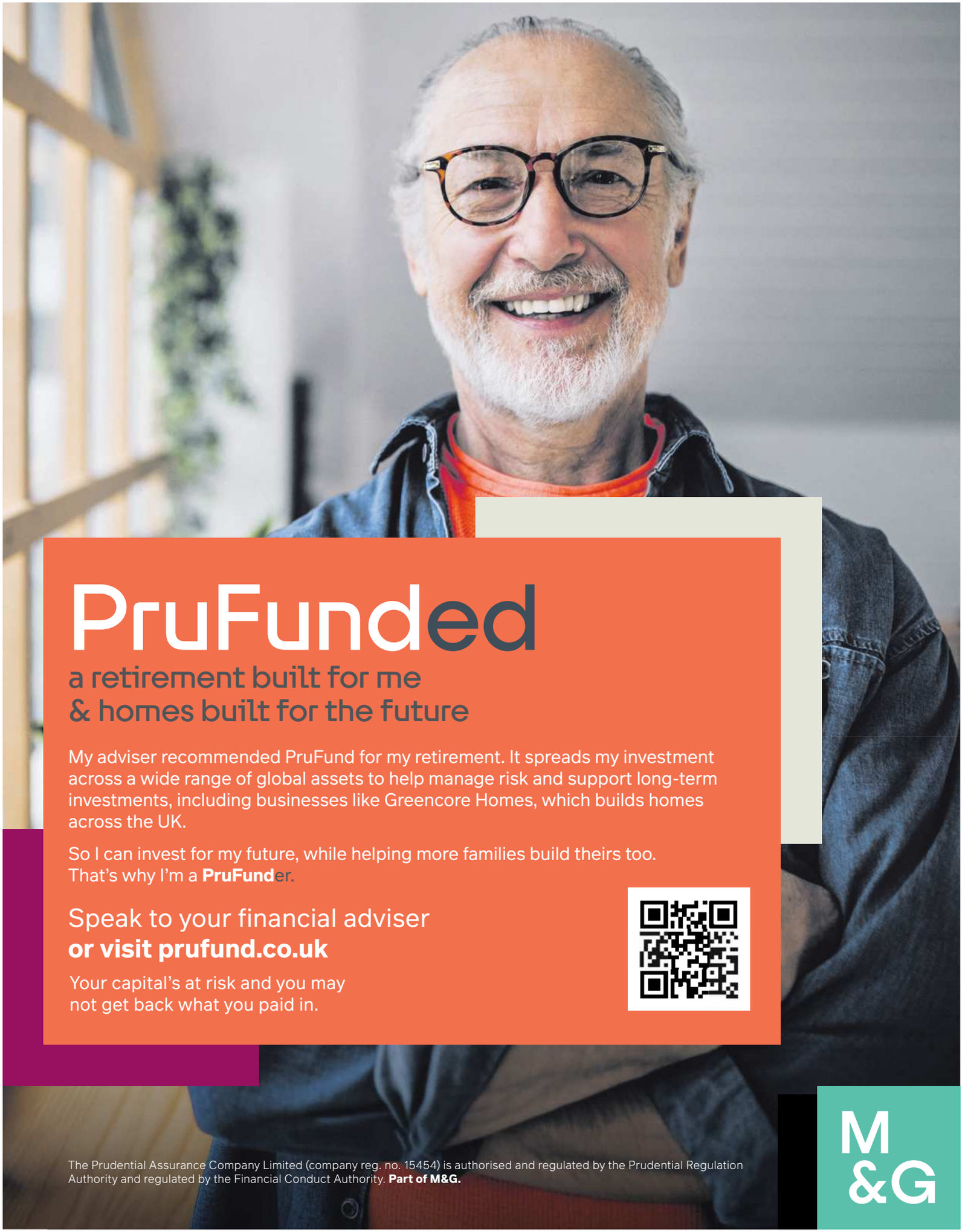

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Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Hard habit for the markets to break

IMPERIAL BRANDS

Market cap	Cigarette sales
£20bn	187bn

Imperial Brands, the tobacco giant, has seen its shares slide lower this year as it has lost ground to rivals in key markets in Europe and North America. We've been here before, however, and with trading expected to improve towards the end of the year, the shares now trading on 7.6 times forecast earnings offer a decent entry point for a defensive income option with an inflation-beating 6.5 per cent dividend yield.

The owner of cigarette brands such as Lambert & Butler, Davidoff and Gauloises, and Rizla rolling papers is no stranger to tough markets. The entire tobacco industry has been in structural decline for over half a century, and more recently under much tougher regulations from governments. And yet they remain incredible profit and cash-generation machines.

A decade ago, Imperial was making £7.16 billion in net revenue, the preferred industry measure which removes all the import duties and taxes added on top, from selling 277 billion cigarette equivalents. Roll forward to last year and it was making £8.32 billion in net revenue from selling the equivalent of 187 billion cigarettes. Disregarding your moral stance on the industry, that's not a bad business to be in selling about a third less product, with reduced costs associated with manufacture, and distribution and still making more money.

It helps, of course, if customers are addicted to the product, as that tends to make demand pretty reliable as you increase the price. This can't go on forever though, so there has been a big push into alternatives such as the vaping brand Blu, heated tobacco and oral nicotine pouches. The only problem is that despite their rapid growth, these products are still loss-making and only contribute 5 per cent of total sales.

The balance, or 95 per cent of sales, are still coming from selling tobacco or cigarette equivalents. The largest markets are in Europe, responsible for 42 per cent of sales, where the UK and France contribute 10 per cent each and Germany 15 per cent, and the balance Spain. The Americas contribute 35 per cent, with the biggest region being the US at 11 per cent and the balance across North and South America. Finally, there is Asia, Australasia, Africa and central Europe making 23 per cent of sales.

Against the swings and roundabouts of trading updates the one constant is the cash generation. The Bristol-based company is expected to make £2.3 billion in free cashflow for the year ended September. That will fund up to £1.45 billion in share buybacks, and £1.3 billion in dividends, which are forecast to rise 4 per cent to 167p for the year, a yield of 6.5 per cent. The dividend is paid quarterly with the next instalment going ex-dividend on August 20 and paid September 30.

An area of slight unease is that that largesse is being funded by borrowing. With net debt rising to £10.9 billion at the end of March, up from £8.95 billion six months earlier. Rising interest rates make that borrowing more expensive with the average cost of debt forecast at 4.6 per cent for the year end, up from 2 per cent in 2020.

We are only six weeks from the September year-end, with management still confident they can hit market expectations and Barclays forecasting 338p in earnings per share, leaving the shares trading on 7.7 times. That is quite a discount to rival British American Tobacco on about 12 times and the wider FTSE 100 about 14 times.

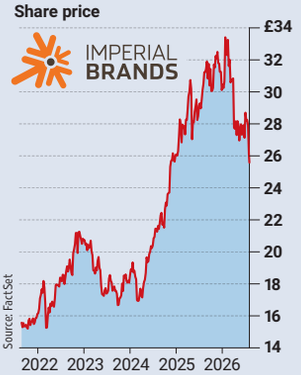
Imperial is a classic defensive option given its relative pricing power when the going gets tough. It is one that is always worth keeping an eye on for when the market gets too gloomy and the shares drift lower. It's also important to glance at the outlook for interest rates because in a low-rate environment, such as from 2008-16, and again in the Covid era, it is an attractive income option.

We wouldn't be chasing this just for the income, or expecting a big turnaround, rather as a defensive option that has been overlooked and could be in demand in the coming years. It has been written off many times but with well over two decades of proven cash generation and operating experience in tough markets, we think it can provide a decent place to park some cash for the next five to ten years for those happy to invest in tobacco stocks.

ADVICE Buy
WHY Classic defensive share that offers an attractive yield and has sold off too far

Smoke signals

Share price



Financials

	Net revenue	Adjusted pre-tax profit
2022	£7.79bn	£3.38bn
2023	£8.01bn	£3.48bn
2024	£8.16bn	£3.52bn
2025	£8.32bn	£3.59bn
2026	£8.35bn	£3.64bn

Source: Imperial Brands

FTSE ends losing streak after tech shares rally

MARKET REPORT

A bit of late afternoon buying momentum helped push the FTSE 100 higher after a run of six negative sessions (Robert Miller writes).

Amid light trading, the index inched up 7.74 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 10,728.04 — a welcome gain ending the longest losing streak since late April but still 1.3 per cent lower since the start of August.

Leading the way was **Relx**, the analytics company, which has suffered periodic poor runs over fears of the disruption risk from rival artificial intelligence tools and open access publishing models. Since the beginning of January, the stock has fallen by 15.9 per cent, but yesterday's rise of 70p, or 2.8 per cent, to £25.40 at least chipped away at the loss.

Also supporting a broader rebound in the software and data services sector was **Experian**, the second-biggest riser, up 76p, or 2.7 per cent, to £28.75, again making inroads into the 14.5 per cent drop so far this year. Another in-and-out-of-favour data and analytics business, the **London Stock Exchange Group** itself, was up 28p, or 0.3 per cent, at £85.06 although the stock has fallen 5 per cent since the start of 2026.

Not all tech-related shares fared so well. **Polar Capital Technology**, one of two FTSE 100 investment trusts that hold stakes in high-flying US tech stocks, had the biggest fall on the day, down 29p, or 4.2 per cent, to 657p while **Scottish Mortgage** sank 21p, or 1.5 per cent, to £14.29½p.

Also recovering from a rocky ride yesterday was **Burberry**, which is down 15.3 per cent in 2026, its shares rising 24½p, or 2.3 per cent, to £10.74½ over reignited speculation about what Mike Ashley's Frasers Group's long-term strategic intentions are with its 4.2 per cent stake in the luxury fashion brand.

The FTSE 250 endured a negative day, down 142.97 points, or 0.6 per cent, to 24,561.43 as economic data dominated sentiment. UK job vacancies fell to their lowest level since April 2021 and unemployment held steady at 4.9 per cent, missing forecasts for a drop to 4.8 per cent.

Full marks though to **Kainos Group** which topped the leaderboard on the more UK-focused index with a rise of 213½p, or 22 per cent, to £11.86 after the IT provider upgraded its outlook for revenues and profit amid strong government demand for digital services.

Wall Street report

The old saying that when bonds yields are high, investors are less willing to pay top prices for stocks, particularly those seen as the most expensive, was in evidence as indices were led lower by companies that have been big winners in the boom around AI-linked technology. The Nasdaq bore the brunt of the sell-off with a fall of 355.20, or 1.3 per cent, to 26,289.71 while the S&P 500 shed 53.30 points, or 0.7 per cent, to 7,691.76. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 116.38 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 53,343.40.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Relx	2.8%
Experian	2.7%
BP	2.7%
Burberry	2.3%
AstraZeneca	2.1%
Lion Finance Group	-3.1%
Weir	-3.2%
Babcock International	-3.3%
Halma	-3.6%
Polar Capital Technology	-4.2%

HENRY NICHOLLS/AFP

Burberry's shares rose on renewed speculation over Frasers Group's intentions

NEWS IN BRIEF

Diageo leaner under Lewis

Diageo cut almost 2,000 jobs last year after the drinks group embarked on a restructuring under new boss Sir Dave Lewis, according to its latest accounts.

The FTSE 100 company's annual report has revealed that the maker of Guinness and Johnnie Walker whisky had 27,938 employees at the end of June, compared with 29,860 staff at the same point last year.

By region, Diageo cut more than 100 jobs in North America, more than 900 in Africa and about 350 in Asia Pacific. Just over 170 jobs went across its supply chain and procurement, and about 400 corporate roles went.

Confirmation of the job losses came weeks after Lewis, who became chief executive in January, said overhauling Diageo's complex operating framework would have "very significant impacts" on its workforce. The company's severance costs last year rose sharply to $514 million, from $73 million in 2025.

Diageo aims to generate about $850 million in savings over the next three years, along with $150 million of savings via supply chain initiatives.

The cost-savings targets were announced as Lewis said Diageo would put more emphasis on other brands in its 200-strong portfolio, such as Smirnoff vodka and Captain Morgan rum, and expand in fast-growing categories including canned cocktails and Guinness.

Goldman splurges again

Goldman Sachs will buy LCN Capital Partners, the commercial real estate investor, for up to $410 million. The Wall Street bank said yesterday that it will pay about $260 million upfront, with a further potential payout of up to $150 million tied to performance targets and service commitments. About 80 per cent of the upfront sum will be paid in stock. The deal marks Goldman Sachs's second acquisition in less than ten days as it accelerates the expansion of its asset and wealth management business. Last week it agreed to buy the exchange-traded funds provider Neos Investments for as much as $2.3 billion.

Exports cheer up Germans

The morale of German investors rose more than expected to 34.2 points this month, the ZEW economic research institute said yesterday, as positive quarterly results and export orders helped to offset the effect of high energy prices and transport disruptions. "The positive trend in expectations further consolidates in August, likely due to the good quarterly results and the recent high level in exports," Achim Wambach, head of the institute, said. A reading by the ZEW on views of the current economic situation improved to -61.1 points from -77.6 in July, also better than expected.

Time Out back in black

The media segment of Time Out returned to profit last year thanks to growing sales in the US and UK. The publisher and events organiser, which ceased the publication of its print magazine in 2022, said the division swung back into an underlying profit for the year to the end of June as revenues rose 17 per cent to £21 million. As a result, it expects to report total revenues of about £72 million, slightly down on last year's £73 million. The Aim-quoted company now runs 13 food markets in cities including Lisbon, New York and Montreal, and it plans to open a market in London's West End in 2028.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33⅜	Aston Martin Lag	34¼	-⅛	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**‡	243¼	-1⅜	6.0	11.3
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.1
4006	2624	**Admiral**	3894	+16	3.7	15.8
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	604	-9	2.4	23.5
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp	25608¾	-199¾	0.9	...
1130	765	Arbuthnot♦	815	-15	6.7	7.5
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	222¾	-4¼	7.6	18.3
2126½	1550¾	Australia & NZ	1975¼	-12⅝	5.8	19.4
740¼	590⅝	**Aviva**	737	+7	5.5	27.4
1122	689	Banco Santander	1068	-18	1.6	13.7
554⅛	352⅞	**Barclays**‡	503⅝	-11¾	2.3	11.5
17	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676		5.4	5.1
363⅜	212	Bridgepoint Grp	322⅝	-5⅝	2.9	64.5
352	264⅝	Chesnara	332		6.8	-65.7
492	349	City of London Grp	481	-3	6.9	16.2
556⅛	318⅜	Close Bros	424⅝	-7	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets	707	-26	2.0	25.7
2957⅝	2057	Deutsche Bank	2813¼	+¾	3.0	10.4
93	73⅞	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	73⅞		0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2215	Georgia Capital	4300	-120	...	2.7
57	43¼	Hansard Global	54		8.2	41.5
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223½		4.5	7.7
1904	1257⅛	**Hiscox**‡	1805	+1	2.2	13.5
1610	928⅛	**HSBC**‡	1514⅝	-16⅜	3.7	17.0
1956	1016	**IG Group**‡	1385	+11	3.1	9.6
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	111¾	-2⅝	8.9	7.0
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**	1983	-31	4.4	11.9
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	139	+1	6.3	-9.5
690	499⅜	**Investec**	666	+2½	5.8	8.6
77⅝	60	Investment Co	76	-¼	...	...
75	48	IP Group	66¼	-1¼	1.9	9.2
24	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	7¾		45.2	2.4
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	161⅜	-2	3.7	8.4
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	598	-½	2.8	6.7
318⅛	217¼	**Legal & General**	300⅞	-1⅛	7.3	30.1
13620	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	12910	-410	2.5	9.1
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	307½	-2½	6.2	20.0
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅜		8.4	16.9
117⅞	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking**‡	112¾	-2	3.6	16.1
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.9	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**‡	8506	+28	1.9	35.7
367⅛	247	**M&G**	354¼	-1½	5.8	28.1
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	311⅜	-2¼	4.1	27.4
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	25		2.1	4.6
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	4⅞		...	-15.3
186⅜	98¼	Metro Bank	174⅝	-3¾	...	22.4
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2055	-15¾	4.3	17.7
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**‡	693¼	-15¾	5.0	13.0
833⅞	438⅜	PayPoint	603½	+2½	6.6	10.2
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1035	+1	1.9	9.1
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-1.8
209	150¾	Quilter	193½	-2¾	3.3	21.7
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1672	-20	6.0	15.5
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	321½	+3½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1950	-35	5.9	10.0
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT	44¾	-½	8.0	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**‡	583½		3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1165	-14	1.5	11.7
2278	1300½	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2201	-34	2.3	15.3
948½	615	**Standard Life**	914		6.1	-194.1
6347⅛	4254⅞	Sun Life Canada	5941	-18¾	3.4	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	2⅞		3.5	2.4
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	4808	-92	5.4	6.7
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼		...	-1.5
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	58	+½	...	9.1
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.9
4	1½	Truetide♦	3¼		...	-5.8
132	77⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	78	-1⅛	...	24.4
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2050	-30	...	10.9
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6431⅜	-28	2.3	...
2275⅜	1781⅛	Westpac Bkg Corp	1817	-23⅜	4.4	17.3
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28⅜		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	53980¾	+20⅜	5.1	18.6

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
365	181	Alumasc♦	230		4.8	8.9
6⅝	4⅜	Aseana Properties	4¾		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1¾	+⅛	...	-175.0
973	560½	Balfour Beatty	902½	-3	1.6	17.2
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	314¾	-7½	5.4	23.1
2890	1715	Bellway	2116	-32	3.4	15.9
4442	2796	Berkeley	3522	-36	...	10.6
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	892½	-2½	5.3	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	407½		2.7	39.2
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	155	-1	5.1	8.8
383¾	271⅜	Breedon	349	+1⅝	4.4	14.4
451⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	425¼	-6	5.4	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	2020	-38	4.1	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾	+⅛	...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	12¾	+¼	2.0	7.1
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	36¾		3.2	8.6
637	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	620	-4	3.2	18.4
391½	241	Genuit Group	269¾	-1¾	4.8	14.8
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	270	-6	4.1	10.0
1062¾	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1023⅜	-1⅝	3.7	14.6
205	149½	Grainger	173¼	-1	4.8	6.3
377	270	Great Portland Est	341¼	-9⅝	2.4	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	374		4.9	...
184	116¾	Harworth Group	176¼	-3⅜	1.0	60.8
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)♦	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅝	Helical	200	-5	1.3	41.4
146¼	84⅝	Ibstock	84⅝	-2	2.4	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	136	+3¼	6.5	14.0
3518	1238	Keller‡	2972	-120	2.7	14.7
8734⅝	8454⅞	Kingspan Group	8577¾		0.6	27.1
726	522½	**Land Securities**	686	-19	6.0	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	189¼	-1¾	6.6	...
25⅝	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6⅛		...	-0.4
195	124	Marshalls	161⅞	-3¼	4.3	28.4
106	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	77	+3	6.0	19.2
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.2
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4460	-58	3.7	12.0
10200	8350	Mountview Estates	8850	+50	5.9	17.0
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	80⅛	-⅝	8.4	...
234	160	Palace Capital	180	-½	8.3	40.0
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1156½	-10½	5.2	13.0
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props	94¾	-⅛	7.7	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30¾		4.9	-61.4
849½	578¾	Safestore	611½	-3	5.0	...
1142	791½	Savills	1054	-8	2.2	20.3
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**‡	957⅜	+5⅝	3.3	...
155⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital	147¾	-⅝	2.9	7.9
12	6¾	SIG	8½	-¼	...	-1.5
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	123¾	-5⅛	...	17.0
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	95	-⅞	5.8	7.3
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.7
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	83½	-1	5.0	29.8
139	104	Town Centre	135	+5½	3.7	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	636½	-2	1.8	-7.6
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**‡	156¾	-1	5.3	...
745	442¼	Unite Group	511½	-8½	7.4	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	272⅜	-1⅜	...	6.5
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	356	-6⅝	7.3	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	915		3.1	12.7

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	112	AEP Plantations	186⅜	+6⅜	3.3	10.9
30	17⅝	Airea♦	26½		3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2016	+13	3.1	14.2
715⅜	589	Barr (AG)	600	+6	3.1	14.2
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**	4147	+6	5.9	11.8
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1074½	+24½	...	...
181¼	85⅜	C&C Group	93¾	-1⅝	5.2	...
5⅞	2¾	Capital Metals♦	4	-¼	...	-33.9
460	271	Churchill China♦	410	+10	5.1	10.3
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4546	+8	2.3	20.5
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1440	-10	0.4	10.2
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5310	+90	2.1	17.9
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1688	-15½	2.2	29.3
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1732	+52	3.5	10.7
151½	114½	Fevara	142	+1	1.7	6.1
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**	18710	-10	3.1	30.0
2185⅜	1136⅞	Glanbia	1967	+68⅞	1.9	36.4
307½	191⅛	Greencore	261	+2	1.0	19.8
79	4⅝	Headlam	8	-⅞	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	615	+8½	5.7	7.0
3632	2544	**Imperial Brands**	2572	+4	6.5	10.2
7646⅜	5567¾	Kerry Group	7064	-49½	1.7	20.6
170	106¼	McBride	160	-1	1.9	8.2
240	85	Mulberry Group♦	226	-5	...	-17.4
1275	880	Nichols♦‡	1095	+5	3.6	18.7
374	252	Norcros	324		3.5	...
381⅛	309	Origin Ents♦	367		4.0	8.7
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	51½	+1	...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-54.8
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	102⅜	+⅝	3.6	21.8
138	92	REA	108	+1	...	-208.9
210	155	Tandem♦	186		1.6	12.0
324	220	The Character Grp♦	316	+1	2.2	-46.9
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	7½		...	-17.3
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**‡	4578	+65½	3.6	12.4
80⅞	19½	Victoria♦	56	+⅛	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1914	-12	1.0	74.3
1527	902⅜	**Babcock**‡	1138½	-38½	0.7	27.0
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2225	-11	1.7	32.3
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2440	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	400		2.5	-9.8
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.6
340	202¼	Castings‡	310	-8	5.9	17.9
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	21		...	-8.1
650¾	446½	Chemring Group‡	608½	-10	1.3	34.2
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦	1352	-30	1.3	25.9
570	184	Dialight	560	+14	...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6⅛		...	-0.2
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1205	-5	1.1	88.0
28500	9292⅝	Goodwin	19120	-500	1.5	58.4
4902	3194	**Halma**	3570	-132	0.7	36.2
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2935	-105	...	28.6
2¾	1	Image Scan♦	2⅝		...	-12.4
3166	2216	**IMI**‡	3050	-34	1.2	24.5
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	3930	+30	2.9	47.5
90	34	LPA♦	77½	-5	...	-29.4
685	409⅞	**Melrose**‡	487¾	-5½	1.5	16.8
261	179¾	Morgan Advanced	242½	-5	5.0	32.3
405	200	Mpac♦	330		...	-10.4
1800	1120	MS Intl♦	1605	-5	1.6	23.8
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2850	-100	0.8	33.7
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	2011	+2⅝	3.6	-47.0
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2930	Renishaw	5135	-165	1.5	44.6
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1537¾	-26	0.7	22.2
489¼	286⅜	Rotork‡	484¾		1.7	35.1
105	60	SDI Group♦	89½	+½	...	19.0
318⅛	161	Senior	293½	+1	0.7	-287.7
2044⅞	2012⅝	SKF Group	2017⅜		3.0	30.2
2754⅛	2088	**Smiths**	2611	-27	1.8	30.5
215	135	Solid State♦	182½		1.5	25.3
249	170	Somero Enter♦	242½	+7½	3.1	17.3
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7010	-10	2.4	31.6
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	3¾	-¾	...	-3.7
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	267	+11	2.7	12.3
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	47½		...	5.1
507½	350	Vesuvius	390¼	-3	6.0	18.5
710	325	Volex‡	537	-25	0.9	20.7
3580	2254	**Weir**	2586	-86	1.6	27.0
2060	843	XP Power	1806	-40	...	-43.0

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281		1.0	60.8
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5¼		...	-6.2
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	391⅛	Anpario♦	520		2.4	12.9
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11806	+246	2.0	24.2
3⅝	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.7
259¼	193	**Convatec**	234	+2	2.4	36.8
34	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	24	+½	2.3	7.9
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	101		...	31.0
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	24⅝	-¼	...	52.3
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0½		...	-0.2
3228¾	1943	Genus	2274	+14	1.4	77.6
2282	1288⅝	**GSK**‡	1888	+36½	3.7	13.4
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.0
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon**‡	355⅝	+5⅜	2.1	19.1
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1652	+13	3.8	12.3
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	189	-1	...	4.8
19⅜	1½	ImmuPharma♦	3⅝	-⅛	...	-9.8
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½		...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	7½		...	-4.1
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	67¾	+⅜	2.3	40.1
CHF131.50	96.03	Novartis	CHF125.56	+2.16	3.0	41.1
962	441½	Oxford Biomedica	492	-1	...	-18.3
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.8
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	4990	-36	4.3	10.7
28⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	26		...	-111.6
30	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	29	+1	...	-12.1
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1110½	+22½	2.6	20.9
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	235	+½	0.6	57.3
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6	+¼	...	1.7
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	70	-3¾	...	30.7
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4357¼	+35⅜	4.4	28.0
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4166⅛	+65¼	0.2	-13.2
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	82¾	-¼	3.0	19.0
3352	2437	**Croda**	3107	-53	3.6	70.0
460	230	Cropper (James)♦	445		...	14.4
195⅜	136	Elementis‡	179¼	-⅝	1.9	-31.1
110	6¼	Hardide♦	90	+8	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	2965	+20	4.6	-7.4
3245¼	2224	Johnson Matthey‡	2309	+9	4.4	-30.3
1081	660	Mondi	862⅝	-7	1.4	27.0
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	132½	-2½	4.5	9.7
997⅛	597	Swire Pacific	972⅜	+6½	3.9	47.6
11⅞	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8		...	-7.4
124	16¾	Synthomer	98	-1	...	-1.0
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2638¾	+85	3.6	-58.9
831	515	Victrex	821	+9	7.3	25.7
430	320	Wynnstay♦	375	+2½	4.8	38.0
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	438	-10½	1.8	9.4

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	300½	+½	...	14.6
260	160	Celtic♦	199½	-8½	...	5.6
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza‡	194⅜	+1¾	5.9	12.9
915⅝	500⅜	**Entain**	550	-6⅝	3.7	-5.3
63¼	19¾	Evoke	45½	-⅝	...	-0.4
52	29	Gaming Realms♦	30½	+¼	...	15.0
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	205		3.2	3.8
$175.70	116.00	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$159.70	-0.20	1.2	32.5
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	279	+2	...	9.4
297	129⅜	On The Beach	190¾	-2	2.1	34.7
144¾	86	Rank Group	104⅜	-2	3.4	16.3
219⅜	137¼	SSP	204⅝		2.2	-22.0
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
840	530½	Wetherspoon JD	809	+7	1.5	13.5
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2466	+29	3.9	20.0

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group♦	22½	-1½	...	-90.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79½		5.0	11.3
831¼	418⅝	**Autotrader**	527¼	+1⅜	2.2	15.4
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	646	-5	2.5	19.5
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1¼		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-2.9
21	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262¼	Future	314¾	-5	5.4	5.0
154	60⅝	GlobalData	83¾	-¼	1.8	19.0
110	44	IG Design Group♦	101	+5	1.0	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**‡	894⅜	-8⅝	2.5	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	71½	+½	7.0	12.1
215½	98½	ME Group	117⅝	-1¼	7.1	7.8
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	14.7
27	12	Mission Group♦	22		...	-1.0
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	204¾	+1¼	6.2	13.4
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2182⅝	+66⅛	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2447¼	+32¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	318½	-9½	4.8	-10.6
1337	874¾	**Pearson**‡	1187½	-9½	2.2	23.1
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40⅛	Reach‡	42¾	+⅝	13.8	-1.0
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3634	1991	**Relx**‡	2540	+70	2.7	22.6
781⅝	391⅜	Rightmove	503¼	-1	2.1	17.9
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	136		...	6.3
130	95⅝	STV Group	108		...	-10.0
450	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
5227	5046⅝	21st Cent Fox A	5227		0.8	...
3352⅜	3301⅛	21st Cent Fox B	3352⅜		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	283	-1	4.1	22.0
412⅝	218½	WPP	391⅜	+6¼	3.8	7.8
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	57½		...	-5.6

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10⅝		...	-4.4
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	73¼	+1⅜	...	-70.8
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.0
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-15.8
2⅞	1	Aminex	1¼		...	-13.8
8924	3349⅞	Anglo Amer Plat	6420	-230½	7.1	24.1
4239	2123	**Anglo Amer**	3831	-97	0.8	-15.7
435	155	Anglo Asian Mng♦‡	390	-15	0.8	34.1
4475	2077	**Antofagasta**	3555	-61	1.6	35.7
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0¾		...	-1.6
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1½		...	-155.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-11.0
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1⅝		...	-13.5
1094	481½	Atalaya Mine	908	-17	1.1	17.5
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	2⅞		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10½		...	-3.1

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53343.40 (-116.38)
Nasdaq	26289.71 (-355.20)
S&P 500	7691.76 (-53.30)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	67460.73 (-1759.52)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25471.15 (+17.92)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1107.32 (-7.48)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9274.20 (-4.80)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26128.36 (-210.25)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5701.40 (-67.06)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5758.98 (-3.51)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8509.36 (-70.24)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14320.90 (+18.51)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6468.17 (-62.28)
London	
FTSE100	10728.04 (+7.74)
FTSE250	24561.43 (-142.97)
FTSE350	5849.97 (+0.02)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5046.38 (-32.44)
FTSE All Share	5786.40 (-0.42)
FTSE Non Financials	6327.30 (+28.57)
TechMark Focus	9602.02 (-41.57)
US$	1.3543 (-0.0009)
Euro	1.1693 (-0.0003)
SDR	0.9901 (-0.0003)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	86.1	86.19	85.81	86.07	249820	1320349
	26-Dec	85.87	86.13	85.8	86.02	2457	2781
	27-Mar				85.96	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.2525	96.2525	96.2525	3206	392869
	26-Sep	96.135	96.15	96.13	96.145	69195	431077
	26-Dec	95.91	95.93	95.9	95.915	83953	547905
	27-Mar	95.745	95.765	95.73	95.745	57217	387252
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.665	95.685	95.645	95.665	63698	385738
	27-Sep	95.645	95.66	95.62	95.64	65559	250404
	27-Dec	95.66	95.67	95.63	95.65	62913	295883
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.395	97.4	97.385	97.39	132939	618672
	26-Dec	97.225	97.225	97.2	97.21	145362	930909
	27-Mar	97.12	97.12	97.075	97.085	128264	478274
	27-Jun	97.065	97.065	97.015	97.025	109789	481740
	27-Sep	97.055	97.055	97	97.015	105415	436263
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun				100.0475	1031	70960
	26-Sep	100.04	100.045	100.04	100.04	939	78812
	26-Dec	99.99	99.995	99.985	99.99	2925	55320
	27-Mar	99.89	99.9	99.885	99.89	4155	37309
	27-Jun	99.795	99.81	99.79	99.8	3663	24095
	27-Sep	99.74	99.74	99.715	99.725	2196	25719
	27-Dec	99.685	99.69	99.655	99.67	2682	20098
FTSE100	26-Sep	10758	10811	10730.5	10762	48032	482282
	26-Dec	10801	10807	10801	10831	7	1454
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8919.9	0	
	26-Dec				8966.6	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.735	+0.045

Light Crude Oil

85.56	+1.06

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	85.6	1.1
WTI OCT 26	84.71	0.97
WTI NOV 26	83.35	0.94
WTI DEC 26	81.77	0.94
WTI JAN 27	80.33	1

Products

Fuel Oil	498.033	9.695
Euro Naphtha	749.003	7.279

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep1298.75-1298	Jan1088.25-1087.75
Oct1246-1245.5	Feb1057.5-1057
Nov1186-1185.75	
Dec1128-1127.5	Volume: 174747

Brent

Oct91.67-91.65	Jan85.98-85.96
Nov90.03-90.02	Feb84.41-84.38
Dec87.89-87.87	Volume: 646844

Cocoa

Sep 4225 -77	Sep4335 -101
Dec 4274 -82	Dec4267 -101
Mar 4399 -81	Mar 4396 -84
May 4398 -91	May4398 -91
Jul 4392 -92	Volume: 23205

Robusta Coffee

Sep 3738 +68	May 3652 +70
Nov 3725 +81	Jul 3620 +55
Jan 3701 +73	
May 3652 +70	Volume: 31074

White Sugar

Oct537.9 +14.9	Aug515.7 +6.7
Dec532.3 +13.2	Oct506.2 +2.8
May527.9 +10.2	
May527.9 +10.2	Volume: 47891

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov203.5 +0.75	May209.5 +0.75
Jan 204.5	Jul 211
Mar 206.5	Volume: 7437

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	12.5
3495	1918	BHP Group	3267	+ 24	3.9	22.9
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	10½	+ ¼	...	-88.9
122½	8⅜	Bougainville	9½	+ ½	...	-14.2
609⅜	399¾	**BP**‡	533½	+ 13⅞	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.7
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	6⅛	+ ½	...	-11.6
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1740	− 10	2.4	8.3
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	147¾	− 1¼	8.1	-4.7
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.2
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.2
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	10¾		...	-2.1
300½	108⅛	DRD Gold	180¾	− 2⅝	2.3	15.3
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-2.9
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2410	**Endeavour**	4098	− 97	3.2	19.8
28	9¾	EnQuest	25⅜	+ ⅞	3.2	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	15.2
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	2	+ ⅛	...	-10.0
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1617	**Fresnillo**‡	2861	− 69	3.9	20.6
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	23½		...	-6.4
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	10¾	+ 1¼	...	-15.3
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	4⅛	+ ⅛	...	-0.1
3½	1⅝	Getech♦	3¼		...	-7.9
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**	551¼	− 2⅝	2.3	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3038¼	− 36	3.8	...
21	6½	Goldplat♦	17¾	− ¼	3.0	29.6
2	0⅜	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.9
800	247	Greatland Resources♦	639½	− 26	...	19.2
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	274½	+ 5½	...	30.7
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	179⅝	+ 2¼	7.1	34.9
858	246¼	Hochschild	513	− 13	0.9	17.8
553	294	Hunting	487½	− 3½	2.0	25.2
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.2
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	103⅞	− 3¼	...	-14.0
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½	− ⅛	...	-3.5
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0¾		...	-4.2
2⅛	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1⅛		...	-10.6
343½	178⅜	Kenmare Res	194	− 1	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2⅞		...	-29.7
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	13¾	− ¼	...	17.8
0¾	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0⅛		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	2½		...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0¼		...	-15.5
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	11½	Orosur Mining♦	16	− ¾	...	...
190⅜	59¾	Pan African Res	110	− 2¼	2.0	20.8
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	14½	+ ¾	...	-51.6
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	20½		...	3.1
22⅝	5¾	Petra Diamonds	5⅞	+ ⅛	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.6
8½	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅝		...	-1.4
938	672	Porvair‡	870	+ 2	0.8	22.1
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3½		...	-5.2
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-6.0
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	62½		...	-781.2
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324⅛	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	8775⅜	− 58	3.9	16.7
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**‡	7119	− 7	4.8	15.7
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold♦	301	− 9	1.7	5.7
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	253	+ 10	6.3	-26.4
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**‡	3388	+ 58½	4.5	15.1
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2⅞	− ⅛	...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.6
27	5½	Star Energy♦	22	+ 1	...	-3.9
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	2⅛	− ⅛	...	-2.1
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-3.0
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-7.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6576⅝	+ 84⅝	4.6	12.9
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	17¼	+ 1⅜	...	58.2
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4	− ⅛	...	-2.7
0⅜	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3⅛		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼		...	-5.4
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3⅛		...	-7.2

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint‡	4614	+ 34	3.9	15.5
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	597½		4.3	13.8
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	109½	+ 1½	4.2	20.7
2886	1981	**Bunzl**	2774	+ 22	2.7	19.7
416	215	Capita	280	− 11½	...	-1.9
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40		...	-11.4
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2322¼	− 6½	2.2	28.6
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6350	− 10	3.4	...
35	15	Diales Grp♦	34		4.4	26.2
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7150	− 205	0.9	51.8
840	505	DiscoverIE	782	− 28	1.7	25.9
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	105	− 1⅝	2.0	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2875	+ 76	1.8	23.7
330	110	FIH Group♦	140		4.8	-3.4
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	824	+ 20	4.9	8.8
5860	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5850	− 5	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	172¼	− 4⅜	0.6	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	145½	+ 1⅜	3.3	15.6
554	360	Journeo♦	505		...	20.8
263⅝	178⅝	Kier Group	256⅜	− 1⅝	3.0	20.0
1170	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1040	+ 5	3.5	11.2
3800	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	275	+ 2	4.1	16.6
99	59¾	Macfarlane	71¼	− ¾	5.1	17.9
189⅞	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	68½		...	-5.8
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	20½		...	-2.7
460	310	Mears Group	428½	+ ½	4.2	7.7
264⅜	101¼	Michael Page	209	+ 2¾	2.2	72.1
214	134¾	Mitie Group‡	208¼	+ ¼	2.2	31.5
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	106½	− 3½	...	15.1
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	190	+ 2½	...	6.0
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	130½		5.7	4.3
187½	110	NWF Group♦	150½		5.8	8.1
66	42	PCI-PAL♦	62½		...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10½	+ ¼	...	-15.7
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.0
64	41⅜	Record	44¼	+ ¼	8.1	11.3
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	919	+ 2	2.2	14.9
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**‡	345¾	− 1⅝	2.7	25.1
310	222	Restore♦	296	− 2	2.5	-63.0
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	14	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
752½	536⅞	RS Group	722	− 6½	3.2	20.9
150	85	RTC Group♦	95		7.1	6.7
123⅞	68	RWS Holdings♦	117⅜	− 2⅝	5.4	-4.3
612	520	Science Group♦	576		1.7	7.7
325¾	212¾	Serco	262⅝	− 1⅝	1.8	18.3
79⅜	54	Smiths News	69¾		8.0	6.0
29	13¼	Software Circel♦	16½		...	-78.6
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	43¾	− ⅛	...	11.2
300½	132¼	SThree	296½		4.8	21.6
350	146	Synectics♦	182½	− 25	2.7	8.3
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	1⅜	+ ⅛	...	-1.4
74	46	Tribal♦	62	+ 1	2.1	14.8
82½	58	Vianet♦	65½	− ½	3.7	45.8
490	294½	ZIGUP	467½	− 6½	5.8	13.9

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World	95¼	+ ¾	...	15.0
269¼	140	B&M European	230¼	+ 1¼	4.2	14.1
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	74⅝	+ ⅛	6.7	8.3
1648	1062	CVS Group	1299	+ 3	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	154	− 4½	0.6	14.7
1248	707	Dunelm	869½	+ 1	8.1	11.3
840	598	Frasers Group	808½	+ 14	...	9.3
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1797	− 1	3.8	15.0
250	123¾	Halfords‡	230½	− ½	3.9	15.2
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	795	− 3	2.8	16.2
895	640½	Inchcape‡	816½	+ ½	4.1	11.3
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0¾		...	-4.1
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	91⅝	+ 1½	1.3	10.6
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	321¼	− ¾	3.9	22.9
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	389⅝	+ 8	1.1	30.7
3⅞	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾	− ⅛	...	-0.8
93¼	61¾	Naked Wines♦	70¼	− ¾	...	-7.6
15900	11200	**Next**	14985	− 60	1.8	19.7
367½	140¼	Ocado	250	+ 15¼	...	5.3
241⅝	167¼	Pets at Home	212	+ 1⅝	3.5	15.4
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	427		...	89.0
747	184	Saga	678	+ 3	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	330¾	− 1¾	4.1	19.1
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	419¾	− ¼	...	-3.8
14	4½	Sosandar♦	12¾		...	91.1
510⅜	411¾	**Tesco**	446⅛	− 1¾	3.3	16.2
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	35½	+ ⅜	8.7	11.6

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	164	− ¾	5.9	16.1
307	195	Aptitude Software	218		2.5	29.9
129	55	Bango♦	63	+ ½	...	-8.7
20	11¾	BATM Adv Coms	12¼		...	-4.0
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	25½	− ½	...	-66.6
3¼	1¼	Blackbird♦	1⅜		...	-2.3
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	96	− 1	3.5	-107.4
28	12½	Cirata♦	13	− ⅜	...	-2.9
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.5
5105	2234	**Computacenter**	5025	+ 25	1.5	34.3
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	243	+ ½	0.5	41.5
13½	6½	Corero♦	7¼		...	-98.2
2644	988	Craneware♦	1250	− 14	2.7	30.1
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
9⅞	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9⅞		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	13	+ 1	...	-8.9
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	112⅜		6.2	21.6
480	114	Filtronic♦	245	− 5	...	...
265	156⅜	GB Group	162⅝	+ ¾	2.7	-5.3
51	24	Ilika♦	25¼	+ ½	...	-6.3
138	56	Ingenta♦	64	− 4	7.0	5.3
178	73	Intercede♦	110½	− 1	...	19.4
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	14⅜	− ¼	...	-1.8
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	48⅞	− 1¾	...	-13.0
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics	1454⅝	+ 1	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	67½	+ 2½	3.0	15.6
14¼	2	Nanoco Group	2⅝	+ ⅛	...	-2.3
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	119	+ 1	0.8	48.6
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38¾	− 1¼	8.4	-70.4
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29		...	-5.8
447	210	Playtech	387¼	− 2⅜	...	0.9
50	24⅛	Pulsar Group♦	24½	− 3½	...	-3.1
576½	398½	QinetiQ‡	550	− 7	2.0	27.4
117	88	RM	101	− 1	...	38.8
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4⅝	− ⅜	...	-11.4
66	35½	Shearwater Group♦	57½		...	-1.4
2060	1083	Softcat	2012	+ 12	1.5	30.2
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	750⅜	− 2⅝	3.1	11.4
1181	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1063	+ 15½	2.1	28.2
90	52½	Touchstar♦	85	+ 2½	3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	322½	− 7½	0.8	...
430	236	Triad Group‡	400	− 10	2.2	40.3
360	210	Water Intel♦	345	− 10	...	16.3
150	96⅜	Xaar	115	− 2	...	-26.7
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	14½		...	-5.2

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	211⅝	**Airtel Africa**	326¼	+ ¼	1.6	23.8
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	201¾	+ 3⅜	4.1	18.3
169½	106	Currys	157⅜	− ⅝	1.9	10.2
1186	687	Gamma Comms	976½	+ 3	2.3	14.1
247⅝	122	Helios Towers‡	200⅜	− 1	0.9	73.4
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.2
1916	638	Telecom Plus‡	872	− 34	5.7	8.6
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	119¾	+ ⅛	3.3	-84.9

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar‡	220		3.2	30.4
5485	3365	Clarkson	4974	− 26	2.3	23.2
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	669¼	− 2¾	2.0	10.2
233	152⅛	FirstGroup	182⅝		3.9	8.5
554	320	Fisher (James)	456	− 9	...	-52.4
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	425⅛	− 11⅜	1.6	7.0
699⅝	458	Irish Cont	640	− 37½	2.2	16.1
36	17	Mobico Group	25¼	− 1⅛	...	-1.1
7	1⅝	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1046	− 24	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	151½	**Centrica**	158¼	+ 2⅛	3.6	-105.5
937½	613⅞	Drax Group	731½	+ 8½	4.1	35.3
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440	+ 5	5.0	12.3
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1211	+ 21½	4.0	18.5
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	458⅜	+ 4¾	6.4	23.6
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3092	+ 52	4.1	25.0
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2427	+ 27	2.8	23.0
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1415	+ 27	3.8	16.4

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2802	+ 14	3.0	5.2
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	382½	+ ½	3.5	12.0
1760	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr‡	1732	− 18	2.8	27.1
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1369	− 7	2.1	74.0
404	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	395½	− 2½	3.9	32.0
210	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	262	− 3	1.7	51.7
194	154½	AVI Japan	169	− 3	1.3	57.5
331	266	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	307	− 1	0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	121½	− ½	0.6	...
1090	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1048	− 22	1.0	...
176	123	Baillie Gifford SN	167⅜	− 5⅜	0.4	...
231	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	222		2.8	35.6
154¾	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	150⅜	− 2¾	1.9	66.8
445	387¾	BH Macro GBP	427	− 1	...	20.1
1762	850	Biotech Growth	1730	+ 6	...	-910.5
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	280	− 1	5.3	98.9
205	120½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	183½	+ 1½	3.2	52.4
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	191	− 1	4.0	25.5
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	606	− 12	1.2	88.0
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	234		3.3	32.4
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	276	− 2½	2.9	31.5
1072⅞	543⅛	BlckRck Wld Min	950	− 17	2.5	39.5
1665	1275	Brown Adv US Sm	1610	− 22½	...	-268.8
1584	1336	Brunner‡	1546	− 10	1.7	55.5
402	312	Caledonia Inv	390	− 4	2.0	50.6
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	587		3.8	27.2
155⅜	85	Crystal Amber Fd	87	− 1	-63.0	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	498	− 2	5.7	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	355		3.7	29.3
120	92	CT UK HIT B	109		5.5	22.5
126	97	CT UK HIT	119¼	+ 2¼	5.0	24.6
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
861	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	846	+ 2	3.8	31.8
294½	186¾	Edin Wwide	259½	− 4½	...	-233.8
1332	325⅜	**F&C Inv Trust**	339¼	− 3¾	1.2	75.5
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	614	+ 4	3.3	27.3
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	263	− 2	3.4	28.5
1574	836	FdityEmrgMkt	1450	− 46	1.4	63.3
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	438½	− 2½	2.3	38.8
477½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	471	− ½	2.2	38.4
915	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	810	+ 3	2.5	42.9
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	82⅞	+ ¼	8.4	38.6
370	316	Global Opps Tst	336½		3.1	43.1
107⅞	103	Golden Prospect‡	105		-15.7	...
68¾	57⅛	Greencoat Renew	66¾		-16.6	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind‡	109¾	− ¾	9.8	-12.6
346	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	342	− 2	1.3	77.7
335	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	326	− 8	1.3	74.1
3500	2740	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3400	− 50	...	-57.6
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	207		5.4	18.4
998	769	Hend Smlr	974	− 8	3.0	37.3
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2995	− 70	...	...
514⅝	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	423	− 3½	1.2	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	137¾	+ ¾	6.2	10.0
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr‡	1472	− 12	2.9	-414.6
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	445	− 4½	1.1	90.1
519	368⅜	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	482	− 10½	4.0	49.0
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc	171		7.2	13.1
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	408	− 8	3.9	81.4
1258	1041	JPM American	1238	− 8	0.9	...
652	395¼	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	574	− 16	5.4	...
313	255	JPM China‡	280	+ 2½	4.8	72.0
986	791¾	JPM Claverhs‡	966	− 10	3.8	28.7
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	246½	+ 2½	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts	163	− 4⅜	4.6	70.9
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	628	− 6	2.5	34.5
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	203	− 4	3.0	35.7
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I	623	− 6	4.0	75.3
1098	799	JPM India‡	871	− 2	5.1	...
867	661	JPM Japan	829	− 32	1.0	81.7
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	446½	− 10	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1242	− 8	3.0	33.3
191½	145½	Lowland Inv	187	− ½	3.6	27.8
138⅞	137¾	Marwyn Val Inv‡	138½		15.3	...
289	234¼	Mercantile IT	285	− 2	2.9	30.8
687	536	Merchants Trust‡	674		4.4	22.0
804	682	Mid Wynd	788	− 2	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1610	− 18	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	175	− 1½	0.9	90.2
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	998	− 2	4.1	25.9
372½	290	Murray Intl	366	− 2	3.5	26.3
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	426	− 1	...	76.1
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	398	− 7	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3918	− 26	1.4	3.8
558	508	Personal Assets	548	− 2	1.0	90.9
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	657	− 29	...	-782.1
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	75½		10.0	-14.0
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2565	− 45	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	586	+ 2	...	-365.7
738	488¾	Schroder TotRt	693	− 23	1.7	70.6
892	603	Schrd Asia Pac	817	− 24	1.6	61.8
378¾	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	369	− 3	4.0	29.4
401	276	Schrod Jap Gwth	380	− 15	3.2	55.0
782	652	Schrod UKMid	772	− 5	2.9	30.8
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17		...	-70.8
572	480⅛	Scot American‡	555	− 1	2.9	35.5
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1429½	− 21	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	84	+ ¼	8.2	12.3
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	228	+ 1	3.7	35.1
352	196⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	314	− 8½	1.7	58.3
429½	334	Temple Bar	423½	+ ½	3.7	30.7
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	194¼	− 1⅝	1.6	65.8
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6⅜		-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	305	− 3	5.3	19.3
206	202	UIL	206		20.3	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt	274	− 4	3.5	20.2
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	706	− 3	...	4.6
398	320	Ww Health	390½	+ 6½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.90846 (+0.00303)
Canada $	1.88118 (+0.00304)
Denmark Kr	8.74203 (+0.00202)
Euro	1.169 (-0.0002)
Hong Kong $	10.621 (+0.001)
Hungary	427.04 (+2.61)
Indonesia	24155.86 (+24.95)
Israel	4.0519 (+0.0305)
Japan Yen	216.122 (+0.282)
New Zealand $	2.30332 (+0.00946)
Norway Kr	12.73459 (-0.01941)
Poland	5.0559 (+0.02361)
Russia	115.123 (+0.1)
S Africa	22.0032 (+0.03031)
Sweden Kr	12.90708 (+0.02758)
Switzerland Fr	1.09959 (+0.00142)
Turkey Lira	64.8961 (+0.0407)
USA $	1.3543 (+0.0004)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4414.466

Close $4368.363 **High** $4436.15

Low $4351.856

AM $4388.75 **PM** $4403.50

Platinum $1730

Silver $64.075

Palladium $1294.466

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7419	8.7399	-147.271	-407.21
Euro	1.1690	1.1692	-15.24	-41.58
Montreal	1.8812	1.8781	-26.18	-77.64
New York	1.3543	1.3543	-0.62	-1.4
Oslo	12.7376	12.7528	40.81	139.66
Tokyo	216.0940	215.8410	-60.39	-155.31
Zurich	1.0996	1.0977	-38.67	-112.9

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2022.25525-2022.25720
Australian dollar	1.90843-1.90854
Bahrain dinar	0.50960-0.51160
Brazilian real	7.04780-7.04980
Euro	1.16900-1.16980
Hong Kong dollar	10.62100-10.62500
Indian rupee	129.68750-129.76750
Indonesian rupiah	24155.85938-24195.85938
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41710-0.41910
Malaysian ringgit	5.49690-5.49890
New Zealand dollar	2.30324-2.30384
Singaporean dollar	1.73041-1.73124
South African rand	22.00194-22.01294
UAE dirham	4.97300-4.97500

Dollar rates

Australia	1.40880-1.40960
Canada	1.38880-1.38930
Denmark	6.45596-6.45602
Euro	0.86340-0.86380
Hong Kong	7.84340-7.84440
Japan	159.59200-159.59300
Malaysia	4.05600-4.06200
Norway	9.40638-9.40943
Singapore	1.27816-1.27822
Sweden	9.53130-9.53320
Switzerland	0.81200-0.81205

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- **Patented AirLOC Technology for carpets and hard floors.**
- **No settings to change – simply switch on and clean.**
- **Low-profile handle reaches beneath furniture.**
- **Full-width LED headlights illuminate hidden dust.**
- **Lightweight design – AirRAM 3.3kg, Multi 1.5kg.**
- **Crevice & Dusting brush attachments.**
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- **22V lithium-ion batteries with twin chargers included.**

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Ruthless chief executive of ExxonMobil
Lee Raymond
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Register

Obituaries

Phyllida Law

Scottish actress who had a late flowering when she appeared on the big screen with her Oscar-winning daughter Emma Thompson

SHUTTERSTOCK EDITORIAL

Law, above and right, receiving her OBE with her daughters and with John Bird in Alan Bennett's Habeas Corpus, below

The dynamics of Phyllida Law's marriage to Eric Thompson were sublimated into weekly episodes of the classic and rather trippy television stop-motion animation *The Magic Roundabout*.

A droller rendering of Serge Donat's original French *mise en scène* of surreal characters was adapted and narrated by Thompson for a British audience from 1965 to 1977. As such, the rather psychedelic cow Ermintrude, based on Law, was disarmingly vague and slightly dotty with a penchant for breaking out into arias but ready to take no prisoners if anyone were rude to her, especially the shaggy dog Dougal, who was cheeky, sarcastic, often grumpy and motivated by his love of sugar lumps — characteristics that Thompson based on a mixture of himself and the comedian Tony Hancock.

The five-minute episodes became a classic of post-school children's television, but they did not make the young thespians rich. Thompson was paid £15 an episode, while Law made a moderate living as an actress in television and theatre, and the couple supplemented their income by running an antiques shop in Islington.

And as the *Magic Roundabout* carousel kept revolving throughout the Seventies, Thompson and Law inspired a love of acting in their daughters Emma and Sophie. "Sophie was always up a tree somewhere," recalled Law, an unpretentious woman with large, frank, blue eyes. "In fact, I thought Emma, with her brain, would run the NHS. Although with Sophie, there was no question she would end up in the business somehow."

In fact it would be Emma who would develop into one of Britain's most celebrated film actresses. To her, Law passed on the same strong, handsome features, the tilted nose and the slightly forbidding no-nonsense air of Law's Glaswegian Presbyterian grandmother — who would push nuns down the stairs given half a chance — but tinged with an ever-present and mostly benign air of mischief.

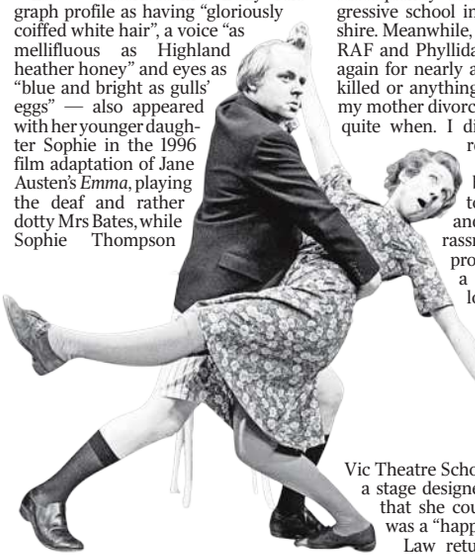
Emma would become a fulcrum of the famous Cambridge Footlights Revue and in 1988 was given her own variety show *Thompson*, in which her mother also appeared. But it was her daughter's marriage to the actor Kenneth Branagh in 1989 that led to a late flowering in the acting career of Law, by now in her late fifties and ready to assume the role of Queen Mum to Britain's thespian power couple.

Law played the censorious housekeeper in Branagh's 1992 film *Peter's Friends*, in which Branagh and Thompson appeared with real-life old friends, including Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie, all playing old theatrical friends from Cambridge, meeting up for a reunion. The following year Law played Ursula in Branagh's film adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Thompson and Branagh separated in 1995, but by then Emma had emerged from her husband's shadow and was already enjoying even greater success. She was at the time one of the most bankable actresses in the world and, remarkably, she added an Oscar for best adapted screenplay (*Sense and Sensibility*, 1995) to the one she had for acting (*Howards End*, 1992).

Law appeared in the original 1995 stage production of *The Winter Guest*, which follows several characters through the course of one cold, Scottish winter's day and was written by Sharman Macdonald, Keira Knightley's mother. It was the prospect of Law and Thompson appearing together that secured American finance for Alan Rickman's film version, in which Law's character is helping her daughter to come to terms with the loss of her husband, encouraging her to find another man. The production was described by The Sunday Telegraph as, "On paper ... the last word in luvviedom", but it turned out to be a touching and poignant justification of real-life mother and daughter playing mother and daughter.

Law — described in a Daily Telegraph profile as having "gloriously coiffed white hair", a voice "as mellifluous as Highland heather honey" and eyes as "blue and bright as gulls' eggs" — also appeared with her younger daughter Sophie in the 1996 film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*, playing the deaf and rather dotty Mrs Bates, while Sophie Thompson was her on-screen daughter Miss Bates in a fine cast that also included Ewan McGregor and Alan Cumming, and Gwyneth Paltrow in the title role.



Law loved the experience of acting with her daughters and, by now well into her sixties, enjoyed the hoopla of attending the Venice Film Festival or even the Oscars ceremony, but insisted that she was at her happiest spending summers at her cottage in Argyllshire, watching owlets growing up just outside her bedroom window.

Phyllida Ann Law was born in Glasgow in 1932, the daughter of the Glasgow Herald journalist William Law and Meg "Mego", who worked in a dress shop. She was evacuated to nearby Lenzie during the Second World War and subsequently attended a small, progressive school in Skelmorlie in Ayrshire. Meanwhile, her father joined the RAF and Phyllida would not see him again for nearly a decade. "He wasn't killed or anything," she said. "He and my mother divorced. I can't remember quite when. I didn't see him again really until I was 18."

Aged 13 she began boarding at Badminton School in Bristol, and recalled her embarrassment when her proud mother visited in a glamorous hat on loan from a top milliner. She won a place at Glasgow University to study French and history, but soon dropped out to audition for the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. She wanted to be a stage designer and the discovery that she could act, and liked it, was a "happy mistake".

Law returned to her native Glasgow and appeared at the Citizens Theatre with the likes of Andrew Keir and Fulton Mackay.

She met her future husband, Eric Thompson, at the London Old Vic, where they had walk-on parts in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. As he was in dressing room No 11 and she was in dressing room No 10, there was no need for "wherefore art thou"s. Law recalled being smitten by Thompson's corduroy jacket and they ended up "having a good snog on the back of the bus" during a touring production. "The chaps got seven pounds a week, and the women got six pounds. But I earned an extra quid a week helping backstage and in wardrobe," she said. "We all took on work to make ends meet, working in the paint dock, waitressing. 'Tom' painted scenery at Sadler's Wells.

"He did say 'Will you marry me?' one night by the Christmas tree when he was drunk, but I didn't respond. I just thought it was bad behaviour. But there was something about him." They didn't talk to each other for two weeks, at which point she realised he was serious and accepted. She later described him as a "very controversial, witty, secret personage, and a tremendously powerful personality". They married in 1957 during a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Law's screen career began on the small screen, with appearances on the likes of *Dr Finlay's Casebook* (1963), *Dixon of Dock Green* (1963 and 1965) and *Jackanory* (1966). Eric Thompson enjoyed a steady flow of work on *The Magic Roundabout* but his acting career was largely curtailed when he had his first heart attack in 1967 and thereafter became involved in TV direction and production.

While bringing up two daughters, Law had a supporting role in the Clement-La Frenais spy caper *Otley* (1969) and enjoyed success on the London stage, appearing with Alec Guinness in John Mortimer's *A Voyage Around My Father* (1971) and Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus* (1973).

As Law was originally from Kelvinside, a distinctly middle-class area of Glasgow, she always possessed a slightly patrician air and enunciated rather brassy rounded vowels, which helped her to land several aristocratic roles, playing Lady Constance Weir in an episode of *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1974), Lady Leamington in *When the Boat Comes In* (1981) and Lady Faulconbridge in the BBC production of Shakespeare's *King John* (1984), with Leonard Rossiter as John.

After her husband's death from a second heart attack in 1982, Law did not remarry. She recalled "freezing in terror" on her only date after the death of Thompson and thereafter much of her time was spent back in Scotland looking after her elderly mother, Mego. She would later write a memoir *How Many Camels Are There in Holland?* about having a parent with dementia, which included memories of Mego putting her shoes in the oven, bacon in her sock drawer, brushing her teeth with shampoo and trying to exit a room via the window.

Back in London, Law lived in a house in West Hampstead full of antique curios and theatrical ephemera. She acted well into her sixties and seventies with later film credits including *Anna Karenina* (1997), *Saving Grace* (2000), *The Time Machine* (2002) and the period drama *Miss Potter* (2006). She reunited with her daughter Emma in the 2005 film *Nanny McPhee*; when being interviewed together they would finish each other's sentences.

Law lived on the same street in West Hampstead as her daughters. "I live directly opposite my eldest daughter [Emma] and at 6 o'clock of an evening, generally there's a phone call which just says, 'The bar is open'. At which point, I put the phone down and go rather swiftly across the road."

Law tried to grow old gracefully but confessed to hating "being looked after. I can be such an unpleasant old bat. If they [her daughters] start taking my arm as I walk across the street, I get very ratty."

As the end approached, Law stipulated that she wanted a "bit of jazz, no readings" and everything over in good time so that everyone could go to the theatre.

Phyllida Law OBE, actress, was born on May 8, 1932. She died on July 27, 2026, aged 94

Register

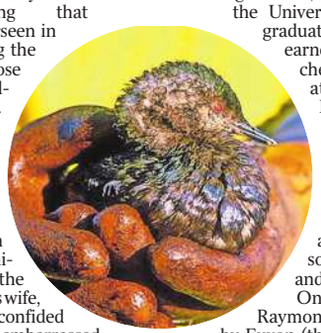
Lee Raymond

Ruthless chief executive of ExxonMobil who transformed the energy giant but whose approach left environmentalists appalled

In March 1989, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef in Alaska. Approximately 11 million gallons of crude oil spilt out into the waters of the Prince William Sound, gradually spreading across 1,500 miles of Alaskan coastline. The resulting ecological damage included the deaths of hundreds of thousands of animals.

Lee Raymond, then president of Exxon Corporation, was in Jacksonville, suffering from a spring cold. He described himself as feeling "to an extent devastated" on hearing the news of the spill, but was unable to fly back to the company's Manhattan headquarters on his doctor's orders, so co-ordinated a response from his hotel room.

Gradually, the attention of the press was turning from the negligence of the tanker's captain to that of Exxon's executives, and specifically the massive company-downsizing that Raymond had overseen in the years preceding the spill. Among those laid off were nine oil-spill specialists. Raymond, in return, fired accusations at local environmental agencies and politicians who had prevented Exxon from spraying chemical dispersants in the wake of the spill. His wife, Charlene Hocevar, confided in him that she was embarrassed to be associated with Exxon.



But Raymond refused to be undone by the disaster. Though he conceded that the Valdez spill called for "perhaps a rebalancing of risk-reward in many of our operations", when federal charges were brought against the company, he launched into a gruelling 14-year legal battle that finally reduced the company's punitive fines from $5 billion to $500 million.

Exxon's safety procedures were bolstered in the years after, but the job cuts continued. By 1995 the company employed fewer people than at any time since the 1920s. Those who remained were subject to an ever-stricter hierarchy, with no question as to who sat at the top. "Everyone in the company works for the general good, and I am the general of that general good," asserted Raymond, who was promoted to chairman and chief executive in 1993.

The reforms that came after Valdez were not only internal; Raymond increasingly sought control over the world Exxon operated within as well. In time, this would entail twisting public perceptions of climate change, cutting deals with dictatorships, and fastening his hold on the biggest players in Washington. "Presidents come and go," Raymond once said. "Exxon doesn't come and go."

Lee Roy Raymond was born in 1938 in Watertown, South Dakota. His father, Clifford Raymond, a railway engineer, urged him to escape the small city: "You have to get an education and get out of here." After leaving Watertown High School, Raymond studied at the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1960, and earned a doctorate in chemical engineering at the University of Minnesota in 1963. While in Wisconsin, Raymond met Hocevar, and they married in 1961. Raymond is survived by Hocevar and by their triplet sons, Colin, Robert and John.

On leaving university, Raymond was snapped up by Exxon (then Standard Oil of New Jersey), and began working as a production research engineer. By the 1970s, he had been put in charge of the company's Latin American division, Esso Inter-America, where he garnered further notice after converting a loss-making Aruban refinery into a steady $25-million-a-month money spinner in just two years.

Already Raymond was developing the managerial style that later earned him the epithet "Iron Ass" among ExxonMobil colleagues. One recalled him ridiculing an Inter-America employee for offering an underwhelming suggestion during a meeting: "And what little birdie flew in the window and whispered that dumb-shit idea in your ear?" Among his more embittered colleagues he was also known as "the Lip" in reference to his pronounced cleft lip.

ZUMA PRESS WIRE/SHUTTERSTOCK EDITORIAL

Raymond in 2002. Left, one of the birds who suffered in the Exxon Valdez spill

After Inter-America, Raymond was posted to Exxon Enterprises, home to Exxon's alternative energy initiatives. Under Raymond, these initiatives were all promptly shut down, and the company's solar investments were dumped. It was his belief that Exxon should focus on its core oil and gas businesses; he even suggested the words "crude oil" be carved in stone outside the company headquarters.

Raymond's approach appalled environmentalists but delighted shareholders. When he took over the reins as chairman in 1993, Exxon was already the world's largest publicly held oil company, but over the course of Raymond's tenure its market cap further increased from $80 billion to $360 billion. This was partially driven by an $81 billion merger with Mobil that Raymond oversaw in the late 1990s, then the largest corporate merger in history. Soon, ExxonMobil was not only the biggest corporation in the country but also the most profitable: in 2005, it posted net profits of $36.1 billion, more than any corporation had made in history.

As ExxonMobil grew, it also became increasingly politically active, fostering close ties with the Republican Party thanks to Raymond's close friendship with the US vice-president Dick Cheney. This relationship conferred significant advantages. When, in 2005, the company found itself on the verge of losing a UAE contract to Shell, Raymond phoned Cheney and had him intervene on ExxonMobil's behalf.

Crucially, ExxonMobil was not beholden to US foreign policy. While the Bush administration condemned the brutal autocracies governing countries such as Equatorial Guinea and Chad, ExxonMobil was free to continue funnelling money into their treasuries in return for oil.

Meanwhile, in the US, Raymond and his team led systematic campaigns to promote climate change scepticism. The company spent more than $30 million funding anti-green lobbying groups and placing climate change-sceptical adverts in American newspapers. In one television interview, Raymond suggested that climate change should not be attributed to manmade causes, but to "sunspots" and "the wobble of the Earth".

He also lobbied against the 1997 Kyoto protocol, arguing in a speech to the World Petroleum Congress, "The case for so-called global warming is far from airtight." Archived documents later came to light suggesting that Raymond had been briefed on the possibility of climate change as early as 1985, and that Exxon's Arctic-based operations had utilised the very climate projections that the company's executives dismissed as unreliable.

Raymond also received criticism for his disdainful attitude to gay rights. He refused to add sexual orientation to Exxon's non-discrimination policy or grant corporate benefits to employees' same-sex partners, and after the 1999 merger he rescinded these same rights for incoming Mobil employees.

After more than 40 years Raymond retired from ExxonMobil in 2005. While American consumers suffered historically high oil prices, Raymond was awarded a retirement package worth a reported $400 million. He later joined JPMorgan as a lead independent director, before finally retiring in 2020 after growing criticism regarding his views on climate change.

At ExxonMobil, Raymond had helped to see the company through the oil shocks of the Yom Kippur War and the Iranian revolution, the oil glut of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War, two wars in Iraq and oil discoveries across Africa and central Asia. Seemingly, the single constant through every upheaval was ExxonMobil's relentless success.

After his retirement, a Deutsche Bank brief described "raw profitability" as Raymond's chief legacy. Greenpeace called him the "Darth Vader of global warming", and The Independent branded him "The man who sold the planet". His ExxonMobil successor, Rex Tillerson, was more guarded. "We're all individuals," he said. "Lee Raymond is Lee Raymond."

Lee Raymond, businessman, was born on August 13, 1938. He died of complications from pneumonia on June 6, 2026, aged 87

Rodney Adams

Maverick printer who went from making T-shirts for the Clash to campaign-wear that won thanks from Nelson Mandela

If you have worn a campaign or band T-shirt in the past five decades, there is a high chance that it was made by Fifth Column, the printers set up by Rodney "Sodge" Adams and friends in 1976. Sodge (a moniker coined by his older brother who thought the newborn looked like a sausage) found himself at the epicentre of the explosion of punk, making T-shirts for bands including X-ray Spex, the Clash, the Jam, the Specials and the Damned before broadening to social justice causes.

In true punk style, Adams was expelled from school at the age of 17 after being caught climbing over the school fence with some marijuana in his pocket. Adams — with two friends — nevertheless managed to secure a £200 loan and began designing and hand-printing guerrilla T-shirts inspired by the bands they were pogoing to at night. Hiring two floors in a north London terraced house, they bought the minimum of equipment and began their own print studio.

In the days before merchandising contracts, their designs were spotted by burgeoning bands who approached Adams to make their T-shirts. He and his colleagues would often print the shirts the day before a gig and then deliver them in person and get into the gig for free. Adams would also get to hang out with his musical heroes, including Paul Weller who often visited the printworks and their nearby Camden squat.

Cat Santos, Adams's artist girlfriend who would become his wife, joined the team, and as orders came in, Fifth Column expanded into the space above Kentish Town Tube station.

Punk had resonated with Adams's irreverent, mischievous spirit. Born in a house in Hampstead in 1957, to Garth Adams and Elizabeth Bradley, both actors, he spent a charmed childhood roving the neighbourhood with a troupe of scabbie-kneed children, playing in local bomb sites and on the Heath. His parents were part of the bohemian scene, his mother going on to become a household name playing Maud Grimes in *Coronation Street*.

After expulsion from school, Adams tried his hand at various trades before landing a job printing T-shirts and posters in a studio off the Kings Road. A chance meeting with the designer Robin Richards led them to set up Fifth Column in true DIY punk spirit.

Adams and one of his many T-shirts that were prominent in the punk era

In the early days, all the printing was done by hand. Images were lifted from the NME or other music magazines, and film positives — used to make the screens — were cut and pasted together with tape. Shirts were hand printed with water-based ink. Each colour was air dried, and the next colour registered by eye. The results were unique, with striking multi-coloured designs, often printed over the whole shirt.

As the punk ethos evolved into political activism, Adams moved into printing for campaigns such as Red Wedge, Coal Not Dole, and the anti-apartheid movement, making banners for marches as well as their distinctive T-shirts. When the newly released Nelson Mandela visited London in 1990, he met Sodge and his team to thank them for their work.

While Fifth Column continued making T-shirts for bands such as Paul Weller's Style Council, Madness and Primal Scream, they also became the go-to printers for charities such as Oxfam, Amnesty International and Water Aid. Their Lynx "Dumb Animals" T-shirts in the mid-1980s helped to shift consumer attitudes and make wearing fur taboo in the UK.

Adams's wife Cat son Daniel survive him. At the age of 40, Adams became a devotee of Taoism, Buddhism and the practice of tai chi. He became not only a tai chi teacher, but also found innovative ways to promote it. In the early 1990s he appeared in the film *Walking Gently on the Earth*, in which he joins evening rush-hour commuters crossing London Bridge. In the middle of the bridge he stops, puts down his briefcase, loosens his tie, undoes his top button and slowly begins to perform tai chi: a moment of mindfulness amid the madness of city life.

Rodney Adams, T-shirt designer, was born on November 14, 1957. He died as a result of a brain tumour on May 19, 2026, aged 68

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Law Report

Green energy developer gave insufficient notice of land survey

King's Bench Division
Published August 19, 2026

Rex (Barstow and others) v Green Generation Energy Networks Cymru Ltd

Before Mr Justice Kimblin
[2026] EWHC 1698 (Admin)
Judgment July 6, 2026

Initial notices given by a green energy developer for the purpose of entering and surveying land did not comply with the statutory Code of Practice on Powers of Entry, because they paid insufficient regard to the requirement to give proper notice and to enter land at reasonable times, as well as giving unduly broad and imprecise authorisation to the developer's personnel.

Mr Justice Kimblin, sitting in the planning court of the King's Bench Division at Cardiff civil and family justice centre, so held when allowing in part a claim brought by Natalie Barstow, a farmland occupier, and two campaign groups, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) and the Land Justice Coalition Ltd (trading as Justice for Wales), for judicial review of the exercise of statutory powers by the defendant developer, Green Generation Energy Networks Cymru Ltd, and granting a declaration as to the statutory requirements for giving a notice of survey under the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

There was however no finding of unlawful entry or breach of environmental law or data protection law on the part of the developer.

Sasha Blackmore KC, **Stephen Cragg KC**, **Siân McGibbon** and **Claire Nevin** for the claimants; **Richard Turney KC**, **Philip Coppel KC** and **Emyr Jones** for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE KIMBLIN said that the initial notices of survey given by the defendant developer were not in accordance with the Code of Practice on Powers of Entry and the authorisation given to its personnel was unduly broad and lacked specificity.

As a green energy developer operating in Wales the defendant was granted a licence by Ofgem as an independent distribution network operator (IDNO) to develop, operate and maintain local electricity distribution networks, and was accordingly an acquiring authority under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It was promoting three grid connection projects to link renewable energy schemes in Wales and the Welsh-English border region to the National Electricity Transmission System. In essence, it intended to build overhead lines across Wales and, for that purpose, it had to survey the land along the proposed routes, which included extensive farm land in Wales.

Since the developer was not able to obtain voluntary consent from the relevant landowners to access the land for surveys and investigations, it sought to exercise its statutory right under the 2016 act to enter and survey land. It sent notices of survey for the intended entry to the landowners, which included a plan purportedly referring to land parcels and a schedule of surveys, as well as the warning that it was an offence for a person without reasonable excuse to obstruct the developer in the exercise of its statutory power.

The developer's surveyors subsequently entered on to various farmland and undertook the survey, prompting concerns over unauthorised entry, lack of notice, disruption to the landowners' activities by the surveyors' practices, as well as safety, environmental and biosecurity risks.

The claimants brought a claim for judicial review against the developer. They argued that the developer had not lawfully exercised its statutory power to enter and survey land, and was in breach of its duty under the environmental law. They further argued that the developer's processing of personal data was in breach of data protection law.

When an acquiring authority intended to enter and survey or value land in connection with a proposal to purchase the land, it had to give notice of such intended entry to every owner and every occupier of the land in question. It might choose to serve the notice by ordinary post, and delivery to the owner's and occupier's last known address after reasonable inquiry would generally be sufficient. In cases where reasonable inquiry yielded no or doubtful results, fixing the notice to the land might be necessary. It was not necessary to show actual receipt for a notice of such to be effective.

A notice of survey was not intended to have long-term effect and would fall away when the survey had been completed. The period during which the notice was effective and what amounted to a reasonable time of entry each depended upon the nature of the activity and circumstances of each proposed entry, including the nature, quality and terms of what had been notified.

The acquiring authority had to consider whether an intended entry was at a "reasonable time" before exercising its power to enter and survey land. In other words, it had to make an assessment of the time, frequency, duration and effect of the particular entry and activity on the land in the context of the specific circumstances of the land, owners and occupiers. After proper consideration of those relevant matters, the acquiring authority could state when the notice expired and might give further notices if necessary.

While the acquiring authority was required to give owners and occupiers of the land at least 14 days' notice of entry, it was not necessary for the notice to specify the first day of the intended entry. What was required was a provision to make contact with the recipient of the notice beforehand.

The notice was to be framed having regard to the Code of Practice on Powers of Entry made under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, including (i) such detail of the activity and its location to reasonably enable the recipient to understand what would happen on the land; and (ii) inviting provision of information in relation to the land, the owner and the occupants to facilitate the exercise of the right to entry.

In the present case the green energy developer did give valid notice to the first claimant, notwithstanding that the notice had been disposed of without being opened. On a more general level, as some owners of land along the proposed routes for the overhead lines opposed the scheme or did not wish to grant access, it was necessary for the developer to give notice of survey for the intended entry. Those affected had the same benefit of notice and entry only at reasonable times regardless of the scale of the projects.

The initial notices were however pro-forma ones, without regard to the circumstances relevant to the land or its owners and occupiers. The authorisation of entry given to the developer's personnel under the notices was unduly broad and lacked specificity.

There was evidence that the developer had in some instances served notices with insufficient regard to the requirement to give proper notice and to enter land at reasonable times, with the failure to grapple with the risks of transmission of bovine tuberculosis being the clearest example of a gap in the developer's insight into the justifiable needs and concerns of those whose land they would enter. Those initial notices were therefore not in accordance with the code of practice.

That said, insofar as the claimants were concerned, no action had been taken pursuant to that notice except the time when the developer's ecological consultants entered onto the first claimant's farmland by mistake, and that entry was minor and inadvertent and would not be considered as an irrational exercise of the developer's statutory power.

That initial notice had been overtaken by more recent notices, which had been improved to provide clearer advance notice, invite landowners to share site-specific issues, identify authorised contractors, and direct recipients to biosecurity guidance. Further, the developer undertook the surveys for which entry on land was required in order to obtain environmental information for the express purpose of its future conservation and had used qualified ecologists to that end. There was no breach of its statutory duty to maintain, enhance and further the conservation of flora, fauna, ecological systems and features of geological interest.

Separately, on the question of whether the defendant had unlawfully processed the personal data of the first claimant and those whose land had been entered, the processing of data obtained from surveys of land and the environment was necessary for the purpose of the environmental assessment and the consultation for the projects. It would lead to an administrative impasse if a developer were to be prevented from processing such data because it would prevent the developer from designing the scheme for which it had been granted a licence. The present case was not an appropriate one for the Planning Court to determine data protection issues or to grant any remedy in that regard.

Solicitors: **New South Law Ltd**; **Pinsent Masons LLP.**

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THE TIMES

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

IF any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. James 1.5 (NIV)
Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

BAUMANN on 31st July 2026 to Alexandra Kett-Baumann and Dr Lukas Baumann, a son, Louis Philipp Julian Frederick.

REID on 19th June 2026 to Rebekah (née Kenyon) and Toby, a daughter, Pia Florence Elizabeth, born at the Royal Berkshire, Reading.

Forthcoming Marriages

MISS A. P. SUTCLIFFE AND MR C. D. G. HOLMES
The engagement is announced between Poppy, daughter of Alison and David Sutcliffe of Berkshire, and Charlie, son of Trudi and Mark Holmes of Somerset.

Deaths

ALDERMAN David James on 22nd June 2026, in hospital, as the result of a fall. Cherished godfather, friend and colleague. Private cremation. Memorial service at St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth, DT3 6BU, on Friday 4th September at 2.30pm. All Welcome. Donations, if wished, to Athena Animal Rescue (Herefordshire) or Lendwithcare and further information via woodsfuneralservices.co.uk, Dorchester, DT1 1SF.

ALLFREY Peter died peacefully at home in Sussex on 13th August, aged 93, much-loved father, grandfather and friend.

ALP WALTER Feride passed away on 15th August 2026, aged 76, after a long battle with cancer. Beloved wife of Robert Walter, mother of Tarik and Efe and stepmother to Elizabeth, Charles and Alexander. She will be sadly missed by them all, her nine grandchildren and many friends. Family funeral to be held in Turkey.

BEDFORD
Valerie died peacefully on 11th August 2026. Dearly loved wife (of 66 years) of Peter, and devoted mother of Rupert, Julian, Mark and Hugo. Private cremation. Thanksgiving service at St Mary's Church, Herriard, on Monday 28th September at 11am.

DAVIES Vanessa (Tessa) peacefully at home on 12th August 2026, aged 88. Much-loved mother of Lucinda and Mary Anne. Family funeral. Thanksgiving service to follow at a later date. Donations, if desired, to Alzheimer's Research, c/o AJ Wakely & Sons, 16 Newland, Sherborne, DT9 3JQ.

HEATH Donald OBE died peacefully on 12th August 2026, aged 86. Beloved husband of Alison, much-loved father of Sally and Jamie and proud grandfather to Arabella, Charlie and Alice. Private family cremation with a memorial service to be announced. Greatly missed by all his family, friends and former colleagues.

HOUFE Simon Richard, born 13th September 1942, passed away peacefully at Bedford Hospital on 27th July 2026. Beloved godparent and friend, he will be greatly missed. Simon was a resident of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, and had an eminent career as an art historian, local historian, writer and antiquarian. The memorial service will take place at St Andrew's Church, Ampthill, on 28th August 2026 at 1pm. Donations in lieu of flowers to the Salvation Army.

JACKSON Gillian passed away on 20th July 2026, aged 90, at Shipdham Manor Care Home. Funeral service to take place at Earlham Crematorium on Tuesday 25th August at 10.30am. Family flowers only please but donations in memory of Gillian if desired for MS Society and Macmillan can be made via the MuchLoved online tribute site which can be found at rosedalefuneralhome.co.uk or may be left in the donation box at the service.

MESSERVY Derek Arthur Frank on 24th July 2026 died peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Beloved father to Sophie, Hatty and Lucy, grandfather to Ben, Josh and Lily. Funeral service at St Lucy's Convent, Medstead Manor, Medstead, GU34 5LL, at midday on 24th August 2026. Family flowers only please. Donations in support of St Michael's Hospice via derekmesservy.muchloved.com

PEPPER Gordon Terry CBE on 10th August 2026, aged 92. Died peacefully after a short illness. Much-loved husband to Gillie (née Huelin), father, grandfather and great-grandfather. His funeral service is at midday on 10th September at Mildenhall Church, near Marlborough. No flowers please, donations if desired to RNLI or Alzheimer's Research UK.

REID Catherine Fleetwood (née Boodle) on 30th July 2026, aged 89. Beloved mother of Duncan, Lem, Philippa and Jamie, and much-loved grandmother. Private family cremation. Thanksgiving service on Monday 7th September at 2.30pm at St Osmund's Church, Salisbury. All welcome. Please wear something colourful. No flowers please, but donations if desired to Save the Children and Imperial Cancer Research via IN Newman's, Funeral Directors.

Memorial Services

HUSSELBY Bill at All Saints Church, Thornham, PE36 6LY, on 9th October 2026 at midday.

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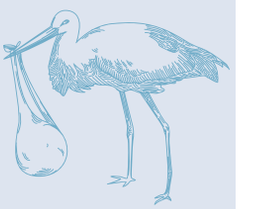

Court Circular

Balmoral Castle
18th August, 2026
The King arrived at Balmoral Castle this morning, was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire (Mr Alexander Manson) and then inspected the Royal Guard found by Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Legal Notices

CR-2026-003132
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES
COMPANIES COURT (Ch D)
IN THE MATTER OF OCTOPUS AIM VCT 2 PLC
AND
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice Chancery Division dated 28 July 2026 confirming the cancellation of the share premium account of Octopus AIM VCT 2 plc (the "Company"), created upon the issue of ordinary shares, resolved on and effected by a special resolution passed at an annual general meeting of the Company held on 19 May 2026 and the statement of capital approved by the Court were registered by the Registrar of Companies on 1 August 2026.
Dated the 19th day of August 2026
Howard Kennedy LLP
No. 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG
Solicitors for the Company

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CIG81220	6.1x3.7x2.5m	140613576	£466.80	£442.80
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DECEMBER 2026

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Sun 20 **Andernach, Germany**
★SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE×: Namedy Castle
Princess Heide von Hohenzollern graciously welcomes APT guests into her home, Namedy Castle. Attend a cocktail party, where a pianist sets the mood

Mon 21 **Rüdesheim, Germany**
Choose from a gondola ride, Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum or visit a historic wine cellar

Tue 22 **Miltenberg, Germany**
Choose from a guided walking tour and liqueur tasting in one of Franconia's oldest wine cellars or visit to a local monastery

Wed 23 **Würzburg, Germany**
Visit the Würzburg Residence or travel to the walled town of Rothenburg and immerse yourself in medieval life or visit Volkacher Mainschleife, the largest winegrowing region in Franconia

Thu 24 **Bamberg, Germany**
★Christmas Eve★
This morning, explore the Old Town

Fri 25 **Nuremberg, Germany**
★Christmas Day★
Celebrate a magical Christmas Day in Nuremberg. Set out on a tour focused on Nuremberg's medieval history. You'll also enjoy a traditional Christmas feast on board your ship with all the trimmings

Sat 26 **Regensburg, Germany**
★Boxing Day★
Explore Regensburg's World Heritage-listed city centre. Enjoy a tasting at Regensburg's historic sausage kitchen, thought to be one of the oldest working restaurants in the world

Sun 27 **Passau, Germany – Salzburg, Linz, Austria**
★SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE×: Gaisberg Mountain Lunch and 'The Sound of Music' Show
Be welcomed by a Jagdhornblaser – a hunting horn blower – into a rustic, traditional restaurant on the Gaisberg mountain overlooking Salzburg. Enjoy a welcome drink as you soak in the scenery before savouring a delicious lunch, followed by a show featuring music from the classic film, 'The Sound of Music'

Mon 28 **Melk – Dürnstein, Austria**
Visit spectacular Melk Abbey

Tue 29 **Vienna, Austria** (overnight)
★SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE×: Vienna's City Palace
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Thu 31 **Bratislava, Slovakia**
★New Year's Eve★
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JANUARY 2027

Fri 1 **Budapest, Hungary** (overnight)
★New Year's Day★
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Sat 2 **Budapest, Hungary**
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JANUARY 2027

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Sat 16	**Malé, Maldives - Singapore** Transfer to the airport for your flight to Singapore. Upon arrival, transfer to a 5★ hotel for your two night stay, including breakfast‡
Sun 17	**Singapore** Singapore is a modern, vibrant city-state known for its skyline, multicultural neighbourhoods, and world-class food scene. Spend time relaxing at leisure
Mon 18	**Singapore** Transfer to the port and embark the ultra-luxurious 6★ ***Seabourn Encore*** for your 14 night all-inclusive voyage
Tue 19	**Malacca, Malaysia**
Wed 20	**Kuala Lumpur (from Port Klang), Malaysia**
Thu 21	**Penang, Malaysia**
Fri 22	**Phuket, Thailand**
Tue 26	**Sihanoukville, Cambodia**
Wed 27	**Ko Kood, Thailand** ★Caviar in the Surf★
Thu 28 - Fri 29	**Bangkok (from Laem Chabang), Thailand** (overnight)

FEBRUARY 2027

Mon 1	**Singapore** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London
Tue 2	**Arrive in London**

Dates not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea. All meals are included on the cruise element.

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  - Intuitive, personalised service provided by staff passionate about exceeding guests' expectations
  - Tipping is neither required, nor expected
  - Seabourn Conversations, connecting with visionary experts
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Today A mixture of sunshine and heavy, blustery showers, perhaps thundery in places. Max 24C (75F), min 6C (43F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	21	C	12.8	0.7
Aberporth	18	C	0.0	2.8
Anglesey	19	C	0.2	0.2
Aviemore	18	D	7.6	1.0
Barnstaple	21	PC	2.0	**
Bedford	22	S	2.6	**
Belfast	16	R	3.8	0.0
Birmingham	21	PC	1.4	**
Bournemouth	24	C	0.4	5.9
Bridlington	23	PC	4.0	**
Bristol	22	PC	0.0	5.3
Camborne	19	C	1.0	0.8
Cardiff	21	PC	4.0	5.7
Edinburgh	17	C	7.6	0.9
Eskdalemuir	16	R	10.8	0.0
Glasgow	17	PC	17.2	0.0
Hereford	22	PC	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	23	R	0.0	6.3
Ipswich	24	PC	0.8	0.9
Isle of Man	18	C	5.2	0.3
Isle of Wight	23	C	0.0	**
Jersey	20	C	0.2	3.8
Keswick	16	R	5.2	**
Kinloss	19	**	6.0	0.5
Leeds	17	D	5.0	**
Lerwick	12	C	0.2	6.7
Leuchars	19	PC	10.4	1.2
Lincoln	20	C	5.4	0.7
Liverpool	19	C	6.0	**
London	25	C	0.0	5.6
Lyneham	22	PC	0.0	5.6
Manchester	19	C	5.8	0.0
Margate	22	C	0.2	2.3
Milford Haven	20	B	0.2	**
Newcastle	19	PC	9.8	**
Nottingham	20	PC	4.8	0.1
Orkney	12	R	19.0	**
Oxford	24	C	0.2	**
Plymouth	23	**	0.4	**
Portland	21	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	21	C	0.0	**
Shoreham	24	C	0.0	5.5
Shrewsbury	21	C	1.6	0.9
Snowdonia	17	R	4.8	**
Southend	24	C	0.0	3.1
South Uist	15	C	8.8	**
Stornoway	15	C	14.8	5.3
Tiree	15	PC	15.6	0.0
Whitehaven	17	C	2.4	0.0
Wick	**	D	13.0	**
Yeovilton	24	PC	0.2	6.7

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	34	S	Madeira	26	PC
Amsterdam	21	B	Madrid	34	S
Athens	31	PC	Malaga	29	PC
Auckland	13	PC	Mallorca	33	PC
Bahrain	39	S	Malta	32	PC
Bangkok	34	PC	Melbourne	18	PC
Barbados	26	R	Mexico City	24	PC
Barcelona	32	PC	Miami	34	PC
Beijing	30	S	Milan	30	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	27	B
Belgrade	27	PC	Montreal	23	DU
Berlin	21	PC	Moscow	23	PC
Bermuda	29	PC	Mumbai	30	R
Bordeaux	30	B	Munich	17	SH
Brussels	21	B	Nairobi	19	B
Bucharest	32	S	Naples	29	S
Budapest	24	S	New Orleans	33	T
Buenos Aires	11	DU	New York	25	B
Cairo	31	PC	Nice	30	PC
Calcutta	28	R	Nicosia	32	PC
Canberra	13	C	Oslo	17	PC
Cape Town	19	S	Paris	26	B
Chicago	25	B	Perth	17	B
Copenhagen	18	B	Prague	17	B
Corfu	32	PC	Reykjavik	14	PC
Delhi	33	PC	Riga	17	PC
Dubai	43	PC	Rio de Janeiro	26	S
Dublin	19	B	Riyadh	46	S
Faro	25	S	Rome	31	S
Florence	32	PC	San Francisco	22	B
Frankfurt	19	SH	Santiago	13	B
Geneva	28	PC	São Paulo	25	S
Gibraltar	30	S	Seoul	30	PC
Helsinki	19	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	33	PC	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	17	SH
Istanbul	26	S	Stockholm	17	PC
Jerusalem	31	PC	Sydney	18	PC
Johannesburg	23	S	Tel Aviv	31	PC
Kuala Lumpur	32	PC	Tenerife	29	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	30	PC
Lanzarote	25	PC	Vancouver	20	B
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	28	PC
Lima	21	B	Vienna	22	S
Lisbon	27	PC	Warsaw	18	PC
Los Angeles	24	PC	Washington	32	B
Luxor	38	S	Zurich	27	PC

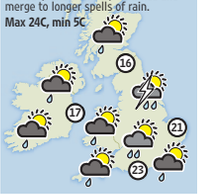
Five days ahead

The chance of heavy showers tomorrow and Friday, then turning drier into the weekend

Tomorrow

An unsettled day with sunny spells and showers, most frequent across England and Wales, where they will be heavy and thundery at times and merge to longer spells of rain.

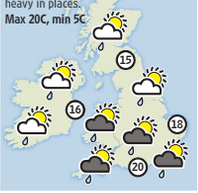
Max 24C, min 5C



Friday

Generally dry in northern and western Britain with just a few light showers, mainly on the coast. Scattered showers in England and Wales, turning heavy in places.

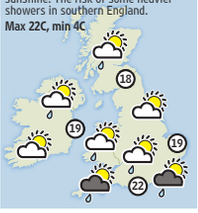
Max 20C, min 5C



Saturday

Occasional light showers, but most places will remain dry with spells of sunshine. The risk of some heavier showers in southern England.

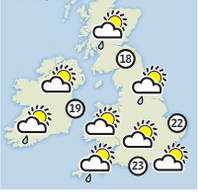
Max 22C, min 4C



Sunday

A largely dry day with bright or sunny spells, although thicker cloud may produce isolated light showers.

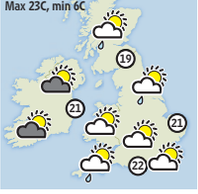
Max 23C, min 5C



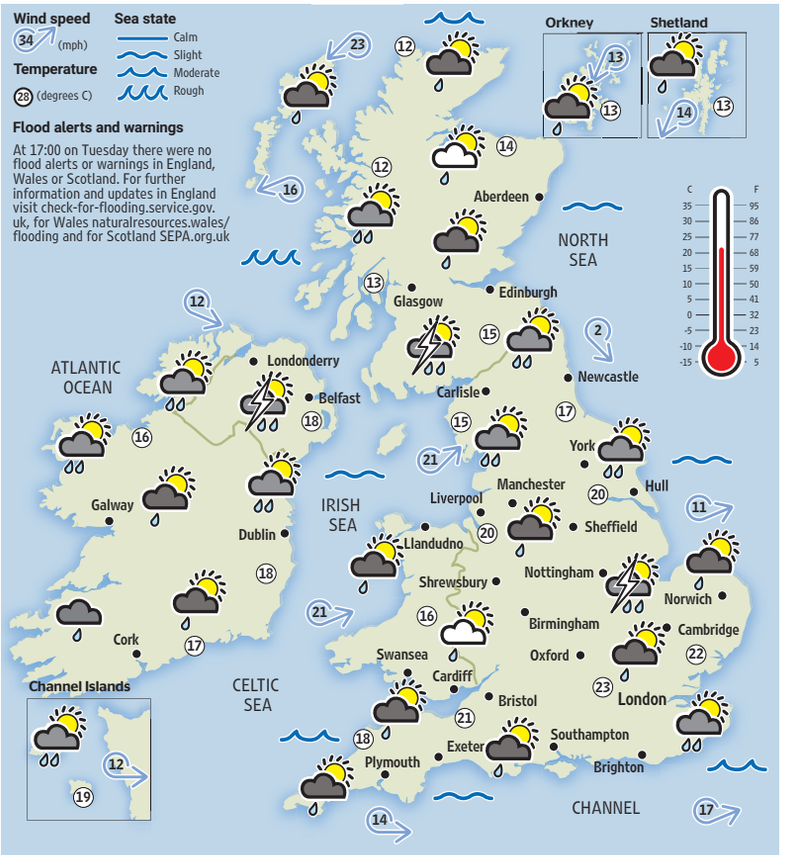
Monday

Another largely dry day with just the small chance of an isolated shower. Turning cloudier across Ireland into the evening.

Max 23C, min 6C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

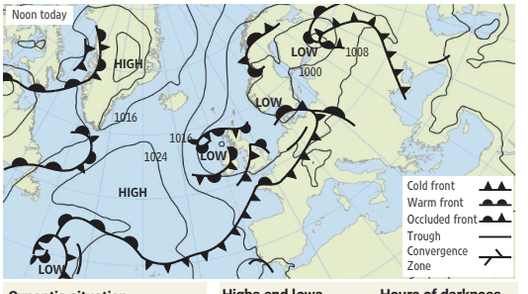


General situation: Unsettled with a mix of sunshine, showers and longer spells of rain, heavy or thundery in places.
NW Scotland, Cen Highland, N Isles, NE Scotland, Moray Firth: A changeable day with outbreaks of rain or showers, but also some dry and sunny periods. Light to moderate northeasterly winds, stronger on the coasts. Maximum 15C (59F), minimum 6C (43F).
E Anglia, London, SE Eng, Channel Is: Early rain in the southeast clearing to leave a largely dry morning. The risk of scattered showers in the afternoon, heavy and possibly thundery in places. Light southwesterly winds, blustery near showers. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 12C (54F).
SW Eng, Cen S Eng, Wales, Midlands, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, Lake District, IoM, NE Eng, E Eng: Sunny spells and scattered sharp showers, most frequent in the north. Some longer dry periods in the south. Light to moderate westerly winds. Maximum 23C (73F), minimum 10C (50F).
N Ireland, Republic of Ireland: Unsettled with sunny spells and widespread heavy showers, thundery in the north. Light to moderate west to southwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 11C (52F).
SW Scotland, Edinburgh and Dundee, Borders, Glasgow, Argyll, Aberdeen: Mainly cloudy with rain or showers, heavy and possibly thundery in places. Some bright or sunny spells at times. Light southerly winds. Maximum 18C (64F), minimum 9C (48F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	06:23	3.8	18:54	3.5
Avonmouth	--:--	--	12:01	11.4
Belfast	04:12	3.4	16:42	3.1
Cardiff	11:46	10.5	--:--	--
Devonport	10:35	4.8	22:41	4.7
Dover	04:03	6.0	16:20	6.1
Dublin	04:32	3.7	17:00	3.4
Falmouth	10:09	4.6	22:21	4.4
Greenock	05:10	3.4	17:48	3.1
Harwich	04:40	3.6	16:51	3.7
Holyhead	03:10	5.0	15:34	4.7
Hull	11:08	6.8	23:32	6.3
Leith	07:49	4.9	20:10	4.6
Liverpool	03:52	8.5	16:15	8.0
London Bridge	06:51	6.4	19:05	6.5
Lowestoft	02:29	2.2	14:34	2.5
Milford Haven	11:11	6.0	23:29	5.8
Morecambe	04:04	8.4	16:27	7.9
Newhaven	03:53	5.9	16:12	5.9
Newquay	10:06	5.8	22:24	5.6
Oban	10:25	3.2	22:35	3.2
Penzance	09:38	4.7	21:55	4.6
Portsmouth	04:32	4.2	16:55	4.3
Shoreham	04:05	5.5	16:26	5.5
Southampton	03:20	3.9	15:44	4.0
Swansea	11:14	8.1	23:30	7.9
Tees	08:45	5.0	21:12	4.7
Weymouth	11:24	1.6	23:37	1.6



Synoptic situation

A waving front clears southern England, with any early rain soon easing. A shallow area of low pressure and associated troughs and occlusions drift southeastwards across the British Isles, producing the risk of showers or longer spells of rain. The low remains over the region tomorrow, with further showers at times, before clearing through Friday.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Bournemouth, Dorset, 27.7C
Coldest: Aonach Mor, 6.0C
Wettest: Harris Quidnish, Western Isles, 23.0mm
Sunniest: Exeter, 9.3hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.52
Sun sets: 20.14
Moon rises: 14.23
Moon sets: 22.13
First quarter: August 20

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:10-05:15
Belfast	21:17-05:39
Birmingham	20:55-05:28
Cardiff	20:57-05:36
Exeter	20:57-05:39
Glasgow	21:14-05:28
Liverpool	21:02-05:30
London	20:45-05:24
Manchester	20:59-05:27
Newcastle	21:01-05:20
Norwich	20:42-05:15
Penzance	21:03-05:49
Sheffield	20:55-05:24

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it," Mark Twain is reputed to have once said, and this summer has proved that opinion depressingly true. After such a long hard drought, we have looked on as spectators to the dreadful power of climate change raging out of control in Britain, Europe and other regions of the world. Even in the southern hemisphere, high temperature records have been broken in many places in what is their winter.

We have been left with a devastating legacy of shrivelled crops, wildfires, a lack of water supplies and much else. Despite prayers for rain — and who knows, maybe even rain dances — much of southern Britain has been gripped by a tenacious drought thanks to a persistent and powerful pattern of high pressure. Wisley in Surrey has been something of an epicentre of the rainless weather, recording 61 successive dry days, and a huge challenge for the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens there. And many other places across southern England have gone dry for more than six weeks, leaving a bleak landscape of dessicated vegetation.

But the Met Office offers some hope with forecasts of some "meaningful" rain tomorrow and Friday with heavy showers across much of England and Wales, possibly with the drama of accompanying thunder. All of which will be a great relief for many areas, although it comes with the caveat that not every place will see big downpours, and even where the rainfall is most intense it will do little to ease the severe drought. At the risk of repeating the mantra, what is urgently needed is sustained and prolonged rains to make up for the chronic deficits in rainfall across the parched areas of Britain.

It also helps that the heat has subsided, but even though it feels chilly, that is because conditions have been hot for so long that the plunge in temperatures has come as something of a shock. However, the temperatures have only returned to something about average.

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Ineos need Onley to rescue season

Sean Russell

In the final 200 metres up the steep Valle del Sol just outside Burgos in Spain, Oscar Onley got out of the saddle and stomped on the pedals to follow a strong attack from Giulio Ciccone, of Lidl-Trek. While the Italian faded in the final moments, the Briton refused to relent and passed Ciccone to take his first individual victory of a difficult season and his first for Netcompany-Ineos.

"I'm really happy," Onley said afterwards. "This hasn't been a good season for me so far. I've had a lot of setbacks and just not really got going, so I really wanted to come here, and the goal wasn't even to win, it was just to get some racing in the legs, to be honest."

Onley had been one of the strongest in a select group on stage two of the Vuelta a Burgos a fortnight ago and the win was not easy. He had to beat not only Ciccone, a specialist on that sort of short, sharp climb, but also the likes of Enric Mas, Felix Gall, Jay Vine and Giulio Pellizzari.

"It was nice to be able to pay back the team," he said, "because they've fully supported me this whole year. Obviously being a new rider in the team, I wanted to show I belonged here so it's quite a big relief."

Onley, 23, went on to finish second overall, behind Gall by only five seconds, and finally it seemed things were going better for the man from Kelso in the Scottish Borders. And the timing is perfect, too, as he prepares to line up in Monaco next Saturday to begin La Vuelta — his first grand tour as the leader of Netcompany-Ineos.

La Vuelta
Saturday, August 22 to Sunday, September 13
TV: TNT Sports

As Onley is all too aware, this season has been a difficult one for him. At the Tour Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes in June, he misjudged a corner on a descent on stage six and went over the edge. He landed in a tree, clinging on above a crevice, and was rescued by his team and the race organisers. The medical professionals popped his dislocated shoulder back in and he pedalled on to the finish line but did not start the next day's stage.

The incident also marked the end of the Scot's Tour de France ambitions. Shortly after his crash his team announced his shoulder injury was worse than first thought and he would not line up to lead the British squad across the mountains, hills and fields of France.

Onley was brought to Netcompany-Ineos to be their leader at the Tour de France. In 2025, while racing for Picnic–PostNL, he looked exceptional at the Tour, finishing fourth overall and just off the podium. But he was also the last man standing against Tadej Pogacar and Jonas Vingegaard in the thick fog, high up on the Col de la Loze on stage 18.

Onley joined his new team for a fee of more than £5 million

Netcompany-Ineos started making inquiries almost immediately after the Tour. The team were without a true general classification challenger and, with Geraint Thomas retiring, were also lacking a British talisman. Picnic-PostNL, a small Dutch team, did not want to let Onley go and a source told The Times they were doing everything to keep him — but a reported €6 million (about £5.1 million) fee ultimately meant they found it hard to say no.

Onley moved over to the British team and took on all the pressure that comes with joining a squad with perhaps the third or fourth-biggest budget in cycling and aspirations of winning the Tour de France within the next five years. He was no longer the best rider on a small team, but the leader of a big one who have won 12 grand tours.

It is a pressure he apparently feels. He managed fourth overall at the Volta ao Algarve, but pulled out of Paris-Nice after stage five because of crashes and sickness. At Catalunya he was 12th but he was then unable to race at the Tour de Romandie.

"Been a tough start to the season to be honest," Onley wrote on Instagram after pulling out of the event with a stomach bug in April, "and hard not to feel like I've let a lot of people down after all the time and investment from everyone at Ineos."

Since his crash in June, the young rider has focused on training and returning to his best. He was briefly at a mini altitude camp at Alpe d'Huez before the Tour with the team as his shoulder recovered and he returned to action in Spain for the Vuelta a Burgos this month. Onley not only won a stage and finished second overall, he also won the mountains and points classifications.

So, what would be considered a success for Netcompany-Ineos at La Vuelta? With Pogacar confirmed to start, and barring unforeseen incidents, there must be a feeling that the podium is the best they can dream of, especially given the start-stop nature of Onley's season so far. But Onley has shown glimpses of his strength. He appears to have improved his time-trialling ability, which will be helpful on stages one and 18, and his ability to beat Ciccone on a short, sharp climb such as Valle del Sol is a good sign too. He naturally prefers the longer, harder climbs and there will be plenty of those.

Netcompany-Ineos have had a poor season despite the new €20 million-a-year investment from the Danish tech firm and the Pulse AI software brought with it. Their best-placed rider at the Tour de France was Egan Bernal down in 20th and 1hr 47min off Pogacar, and they did not win a stage. They managed a little better at the Giro d'Italia in May, with Thymen Arensman in fourth, 7min 2sec back from Vingegaard, but, with only one stage win for Filippo Ganna in the time-trial, it was not a performance worth writing home about.

This means the pressure on Onley to save Netcompany-Ineos's season is huge. A stage win for Onley would of course go some way to that, but really, the team will be hoping for a podium, to show they are still able to mix at the very top.

Sir David Brailsford told The Times in April that Onley would be given time to grow into his role but that was before the grand tours kicked off. Now all eyes will be turning to Onley at La Vuelta even if they pretend otherwise. When the young rider signed for Netcompany-Ineos there was a feeling that the young man needed the team more than they needed him. At this point in the season it is looking quite the opposite.

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Ombudsman can retain his crown

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Big races that are billed as a match between two top horses often fail to deliver, but the Juddmonte International Stakes (3.35) at York today looks the real deal, with **Ombudsman** taken to see off Constitution River in a vintage clash of the generations.

Trained in Newmarket by the father-and-son team of John and Thady Gosden, Ombudsman was unraced as a juvenile and only made his debut in the June of his three-year-old season in 2024. The patient approach taken with him ruled out a crack at the classics, but it has paid rich dividends as he has improved with age, his career record now standing at nine wins and three seconds from 12 starts, while he produced a new high when thrashing a strong field in the Prince Of Wales's Stakes at Royal Ascot last time.

Ombudsman stormed to a four-length defeat of last year's Arc runner-up Minnie Hauk at Ascot and, while several hot favourites have been beaten in this race's rich history, the Knavesmire holds no fears for him as he was similarly impressive in this race 12 months ago. The Gosden stable have landed this group one prize four times in the past eight years and Ombudsman can add to that tally.

The classic generation is represented by Constitution River, from the powerful Aidan O'Brien yard, and he is a worthy opponent. Narrowly beaten on his debut last year, he has won all five subsequent starts, including the French Derby and the Eclipse. He is still progressing, but has more to find if he is to beat Ombudsman and this task could prove just beyond him.

O'Brien looks to have stronger claims in the Sky Bet Great Voltigeur Stakes (3.00), with **Pierre Bonnard** taken to provide a minor upset by beating stablemate Christmas Day. Christmas Day won the Derby at Epsom in June, but was second to Benvenuto Cellini in the Irish equivalent when just a neck ahead of third-placed Pierre Bonnard. A 5lb swing in the weights can see those placings reversed here.

Richard Spencer has proved a dab hand with sprinters in recent seasons and he can saddle **The Man** to land the opening Hong Kong Jockey Club World Pool Handicap (1.50). A winner at York last May, he confirmed his liking for this track when beaten just a head in this race 12 months ago. He has slipped to a 3lb lower mark this time around and shaped as though returning to form at Goodwood last time.

Gentle Hurricane looked useful when making a winning debut at Salisbury and he can cope with a step up in class in the Tattersalls Acomb Stakes (2.25). He was strong at the finish there and, with this extra furlong in his favour, he can give the Andrew Balding stable a third success in five years in this group three contest.

Small Fry and Valedictory look the pair to concentrate on in the Sky Bet Stayers Handicap (4.10), with preference for the former. He was a little unlucky in running when second at Goodwood last time and, with this return to further in his favour, he can go one better. **Havana Sprite** rates the best bet of the day in the Sky Bet Nursery (5.20). She produced a brilliant turn of foot when winning on her handicap debut at Newmarket last time, clocking an extremely sharp 10.75sec for the penultimate furlong as she swept from last to first. A 4lb rise for that success looks lenient and her speed can again prove pivotal in this big field.

ALAN CROWHURST/GETTY IMAGES

William Buick won the International at York on Ombudsman last year and the combination again looks the one to beat today

Draper left waiting for US wild card

Tennis
Tom Kershaw Tennis Correspondent

Jack Draper has been kept waiting to see if he will receive a wild card into the US Open main draw after one spot was held back by organisers, while the final place in the women's singles has almost certainly been reserved for Serena Williams.

The 24-year-old made his latest comeback in Montreal earlier this month from the bone bruising injury that has hindered him for more than a year now and forced him to withdraw on the eve of Wimbledon. But an emotional first-round exit in Canada against Terence Atmane was followed by another first-round defeat against Martin Landaluce in Cincinnati, Ohio last week.

Draper admitted he had hit "rock bottom" between those losses after being limited to playing just seven tournaments since Flushing Meadows last year — a long period of absences that has precipitated a sharp drop from a career-high ranking of No 4 in the world last summer to No 143, which left him outside the cutoff for the main draw.

The Briton's run to the semi-finals in New York in 2024, his commercial appeal, and the fact he was initially slated to play in the mixed doubles event with Jessica Pegula, which clashes with qualifying next week before the main draw begins on August 30, could yet mean he still has a hope of being awarded the final berth. The United States Tennis Association has little room for manoeuvre as two spots are awarded as part of reciprocal agreements with Tennis Australia (Alexei Popyrin) and the French Tennis Federation (Gaël Monfils).

Venus Williams, 46, has received a wild card into the singles draw despite losing all ten of her matches this season.

Results

Football

Vertu EFL Trophy: North: Group B Wigan 3 Aston Villa U21 2. **Group E** Stockport 6 Everton U21 3. **South: Group C** Reading 1 Wycombe 1 (Reading win 3-1 on pens). **Group F** Barnet 5 Arsenal U21 1; Leyton Orient 1 AFC Wimbledon 1 (Leyton win 6-5 on pens). **Group G** Northampton 0 Brighton U21 3.

National League Cup: Group A Gateshead 1 Nottm Forest 1 (Nottm Forest win 5-4 on pens); Halifax 6 Derby U21 2; Scunthorpe 4 Stoke 0; Wealdstone 1 Wolves U21 3. **Group B** Aldershot 2 Fulham U21 2 (Fulham win 4-2 on pens); Braintree 1 Ipswich U21 1 (Ipswich win 4-3 on pens); Hornchurch 1 Norwich U21 2; Worthing 1 West Ham U21 2. **Group C** Boreham Wood 5 Leeds U21 2; Solihull Moors 1 Middlesbrough U23 3; Tamworth 5 Newcastle U21 3. **Group D** Boston 2 Birmingham U21 3; Sutton 0 Leicester U21 0 (Sutton win 3-1 on pens); Truro 2 Southampton U21 1; Woking 0 West Brom U21 0 (West Brom win 4-1 on pens).

Enterprise North Bedford 2 Buxton 1; Brackley 0 King's Lynn 2; Darlington 0 Chester 1; Hebburn 1 Worksop 0; Hednesford 2 Southport 2; Hereford 3 Radcliffe 0; Marine 0 Chorley 2; Merthyr 2 AFC Telford 2; Morecambe 0 South Shields 1; Oxford City 1 Harborough 1; Scarborough 3 Spennymoor 0; Spalding 0 Macclesfield 0. **South** AFC Totton 0 Dorking 3; Dover 0 Tonbridge 1; Hemel Hempstead 0 Maidenhead 1; Horsham 2 Hampton & Richmond 0; Maidstone 1 Folkestone 1; Slough 0 Farnham 1; Torquay 0 Weston-s-M 0; Walton & Hersham 0 Dagenham & Redbridge 2.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Hull Kingston Rovers 22 Warrington Wolves 34.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds	23	18	0	5	784	346	36
Wigan	23	18	0	5	689	407	36
Warrington	23	17	0	6	632	382	34
Wakefield	23	16	0	7	625	422	32
Hull KR	23	15	0	8	682	383	30
Leigh	23	15	0	8	508	428	30
St Helens	23	13	0	10	548	508	26
Catalans D	23	9	0	14	449	691	18
Castleford	23	8	0	15	408	716	16
Toulouse	23	7	0	16	460	618	14
York	23	7	0	16	454	665	14
Hull	23	6	0	17	399	499	12
Huddersfield	23	6	0	17	401	661	12
Bradford	23	6	0	17	392	705	12

Tennis

Cincinnati Open

Third round: Men T Paul (US) bt D Vallejo (Par) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; C O'Connell (Aus) wo J Fonseca (Por); N Borges (Por) bt A Rublev (Russ) 6-3, 6-4; T Fritz (US) bt D Merida Aguilar (Sp) 6-3, 6-4; L Musetti (It) bt M Zheng (US) 6-1, 6-3. **Women** A Anisimova (US) bt A Eala (Phil) 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; M Andreeva (Russ) bt J Tjen (Ina) 6-1, 7-6 (7-5); X Wang (China) wo E Svitolina (Ukr); M Keys (US) bt K Siniakova (Cz) 6-1, 6-3; C Gauff (US) bt A Li (US) 6-1, 7-6 (7-3).

Fixtures

Football

Champions League play-offs, first leg (8.0): Celtic v LASK Linz.

Vertu EFL Trophy: North: Group D Mansfield v Man City U21 (7.0).

Enterprise National: South Farnborough v Chesham (7.45).

Cricket

First Test: Headingley: First day of five (11.0; 90 overs minimum): England v Pakistan.

York

Rob Wright

1.50 The Man
2.25 Gentle Hurricane
3.00 Pierre Bonnard (nb)
3.35 Ombudsman
4.10 Small Fry
4.45 Stargazed
5.20 Havana Sprite (nap)

Going: good
Draw: no advantage
Racing TV

1.50 Hong Kong Jockey Club World Pool Handicap (Heritage Handicap) ITV
(£69,579: 5f) (22 runners)

1 (17)	012010 **DUBAI BLING** 18 (P,D) H Palmer 4-9-12	O Murphy	104
2 (16)	P20312 **STRATUSNINE** 18 (C) H Palmer 4-9-12	J Doyle	♦105
3 (19)	24-530 **WEST ACRE** 18 (D) G Scott 4-9-10	D Keenan	83
4 (13)	102120 **DARK THIRTY** 18 (C) J & S Quinn 6-9-8	J Hart	102
5 (9)	1-3321 **COROLLA POINT** 18 (D) E Bethell 4-9-8	C Rodriguez	100
6 (1)	0-3136 **LEXINGTON BLITZ** 22 (P,D) R Cowell 4-9-6	E Greatrex	99
7 (2)	416-00 **CANDY** 22 R Spencer 4-9-5	G Wood	--
8 (18)	30-300 **AGAINST THE WIND** 97 (D) K Ryan 4-9-5	K Stott	74
9 (4)	316045 **TOCA MADERA** 18 (D) D O'Meara 5-9-4	D Tudhope	96
10 (20)	-04001 **TREFOR** 9 (CD) C Hills 5-9-4(5ex)	K Shoemark	90
11 (8)	033025 **EROSANDPSYCHE** 10 (T,V,D) D J Murphy 8-9-3	O Orr	97
12 (12)	6-1412 **NAANA'S SPARKLE** 22 (T,D) Lemos Souza 4-9-3	K O'Neill	97
13 (7)	000000 **SPARTAN ARROW** 11 (B,D) A Watson 6-9-2	L Morris	86
14 (10)	111502 **GOLD STAR HERO** 11 (P,D) M Bell 4-9-2	H Crouch	94
15 (21)	-56310 **TOYOTOMI** 60 (D) D O'Meara 5-9-2	R Ryan	95
16 (6)	203000 **APOLLO ONE** 25 P Charalambous & J Clutterbuck 8-8-13	C T Keane	95
17 (15)	000311 **DAPPER VALLEY** 108 (D) Michael Keady 5-8-13	T Marquand	91
18 (5)	510533 **AIR FORCE ONE** 25 (V,CD) G Oldroyd 5-8-13	P J McDonald	91
19 (11)	6-0450 **STORMY IMPACT** 22 (D) R & P Fahey 4-8-11	W Fentiman (3)	90
20 (3)	-66600 **THE MAN** 22 (P,T,CD) R Spencer 4-8-11	D Egan	103
21 (14)	000100 **ZIGGY'S TRITON** 4 (P,CD) D O'Meara 4-8-10	S De Sousa	89
22 (22)	000600 **ANOTHER BAAR** 18 (T,D) A Keatley 6-8-10	MP Sheehy	87

13-2 Trefor, 7-1 Toca Madera, 8-1 Stratusnine, Corolla Point, 10-1 Air Force One, Lexington Blitz, 12-1 The Man, Dark Thirty.

Rob Wright's choice: The Man goes well here and is now 3lb lower than when second in this last year **Dangers:** Gold Star Hero, Erosandpsyche

2.25 Tattersalls Acomb Stakes ITV
(Group 3: 2-Y-O: £99,242: 7f) (11)

1 (8)	51051 **ALFRED WALLACE** 26 (D) E Walker 9-3	K Shoemark	105
2 (9)	1510 **BIG CIGAR** 20 (C) R & P Fahey 9-3	O Orr	93
3 (5)	2310 **CLASH OF HEARTS** 19 A Keatley 9-3	MP Sheehy	87
4 (10)	21633 **CONFUCIUS** 32 (BF) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	W M Lordan	101
5 (1)	51 **FUEL THE JET** 33 (D) Tom Clover 9-3	N Callan	86
6 (6)	1 **GENTLE HURRICANE** 29 A Balding 9-3	O Murphy	81
7 (11)	212 **HAFFNER** 22 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	R L Moore	♦108
8 (2)	102 **SIOUXPERB** 19 A Watson 9-3	H Crouch	74
9 (4)	221 **STARDOM GLORY** 53 H Palmer 9-3	J Doyle	89
10 (7)	301 **TREAN** 23 (H,D) P Twomey (Ire) 9-3	W J Lee	102
11 (3)	41 **VEGA KING** 22 (D) K R Burke 9-3	C Lee	87

5-2 Haffner, 7-2 Trean, 11-2 Gentle Hurricane, 6-1 Alfred Wallace, 13-2 Confucius, 10-1 Vega King, 14-1 Stardom Glory, Fuel The Jet.

Wright choice: Gentle Hurricane had plenty in hand at Salisbury and he seems sure to appreciate this longer trip **Dangers:** Haffner, Confucius

3.00 Sky Bet Great Voltigeur Stakes ITV
(Group 2: 3-Y-O: £141,775: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (4)	1-1312 **CHRISTMAS DAY** 52 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-7	R L Moore	117
2 (6)	1-1121 **MALTESE CROSS** 36 (D) W Haggas 9-7	T Marquand	♦119
3 (3)	0-4410 **ANTIGUA** 52 (B,T) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	R P Whelan	89
4 (1)	4162 **GALIYAN** 41 (D) A Balding 9-2	O Murphy	106
5 (2)	1-0203 **PIERRE BONNARD** 52 A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	W M Lordan	118
6 (5)	4-111 **SUPERIOR CHOICE** 33 J & T Gosden 9-2	S Foley	104

2-1 Maltese Cross, 11-4 Christmas Day, 3-1 Pierre Bonnard, 5-1 Superior Choice, 14-1 Galiyan, 100-1 Antigua.

Wright choice: Pierre Bonnard, a good third in the Irish Derby, is weighted to reverse form with runner-up Christmas Day **Danger:** Christmas Day

3.35 Juddmonte International Stakes ITV
(Group 1: £850,650: 1m 2f) (9)

1 (4)	233-14 **ALMAQAM** 63 (D) E Walker 5-9-8	K Shoemark	122
2 (6)	10-240 **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE** 63 (P,D) J & T Gosden 4-9-8	R Havlin	91
3 (1)	12-111 **OMBUDSMAN** 63 (CD) J & T Gosden 5-9-8	W Buick	♦132
4 (5)	014-02 **PRIDE OF ARRAS** 25 (CD) R Beckett 4-9-8	R Ryan	111
5 (9)	111-11 **ZAYDANN** 28 (D) F Graffard (FR) 4-9-8	M Barzalona	115
6 (8)	-42006 **ACTION** 25 A P O'Brien (Ire) 3-9-1	R P Whelan	114
7 (7)	11-111 **CONSTITUTION RIVER** 46 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 3-9-1	R L Moore	124
8 (3)	11-123 **HAWK MOUNTAIN** 46 (P) A P O'Brien (Ire) 3-9-1	W M Lordan	118
9 (2)	11-101 **ITEM** 25 (CD) A Balding 3-9-1	C T Keane	122

Evens Ombudsman, 7-4 Constitution River, 6-1 Item, 20-1 Almaqam, Hawk Mountain, 25-1 Zaydann, 33-1 Pride Of Arras, 150-1 Action, Devil's Advocate.

Wright choice: Ombudsman looked better than ever when winning at Royal Ascot; he can strike again **Dangers:** Constitution River, Almaqam

4.10 Sky Bet Stayers Handicap (Heritage Handicap) ITV
(£51,540: 2m) (17)

1 (16)	-15060 **DUKE OF OXFORD** 19 (T,D) M Bell 6-9-12	H Crouch	99
2 (9)	602150 **PRYDWEN** 53 (D) G Scott 8-9-12	D Tudhope	♦100
3 (5)	4-0521 **KIRCHNER** 26 (P,D) James Owen 4-9-7	R L Moore	97
4 (10)	100-62 **SMALL FRY** 18 J P O'Brien (Ire) 5-9-6	D Browne McMonagle	95
5 (4)	-26115 **VALEDICTORY** 18 (B,BF) J & T Gosden 4-9-5	W Buick	95
6 (15)	20-130 **MORDOR** 64 G Elliott (Ire) 6-9-4	J P Spencer	94
7 (14)	-11502 **TEAM PLAYER** 32 (P,T,D) Ewan Whillans 4-9-4	G Fairley	95
8 (12)	21003- **MANXMAN** 351 (V,D) S & E Crisford 6-9-3	J Doyle	--
9 (7)	40-101 **IN THE BREEZE** 73 (D) Miss H Knight 8-9-3	C T Keane	93
10 (11)	0-0301 **BOATSWAIN** 45 (P,D) S & E Crisford 4-9-2	C Rodriguez	84
11 (1)	-00100 **WESTMINSTER MOON** 23 (T) A J Martin (Ire) 6-9-1	R Colgan	92
12 (3)	121612 **SHRIMP SHADY** 11 (BF,D) A Balding 4-9-1	R Hornby	90
13 (6)	2-0350 **KILMEADEN** 11 (V) Faye Bramley 4-9-0	C Lee	88
14 (13)	124062 **GHAIYYA** 26 C Johnston 4-9-0	R Ryan	88
15 (2)	0-4423 **FIREBLADE** 26 (BF,D) D Cunha 5-8-13	K Shoemark	91
16 (17)	42-363 **RIDE THE THUNDER** 32 (BF) R Varian 4-8-13	R Dawson	91
17 (8)	/43513 **MOUNTAIN ROAD** 11 (D) J Goldie 7-8-12	Lauren Young (5)	87

7-2 Small Fry, 11-2 Valedictory, 6-1 Ride The Thunder, 13-2 Shrimp Shady, 8-1 Kirchner, 10-1 Team Player, 16-1 Boatswain, Fireblade.

Wright choice: Small Fry did not get the clearest of runs when a staying-on second over shorter at Goodwood **Dangers:** Valedictory, Kirchner

4.45 Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Handicap (Heritage Handicap)
(3-Y-O: £51,540: 5f) (19)

1 (15)	131101 **NAANA'S SHADOW** 20 (CD) K Scott 9-9	O Murphy	♦102
2 (14)	3513-3 **POATAN** 67 G Scott 9-6	D Egan	101
3 (18)	15-000 **REVIVAL POWER** 39 (CD) T Easterby 9-2	C T Keane	84
4 (11)	100263 **BAKER BLUE** 3 (D) D Cunha 9-1	C Rodriguez	94
5 (9)	031265 **SCHRODINGER'S CAT** 20 (D) G Tuer 9-1	O Stammers	96
6 (13)	14034 **MANATEE MEHMAS** 20 (T,D) D O'Meara 8-13	D Tudhope	92
7 (1)	10-160 **BLACK STAR BOY** 61 (T,D) E Walker 8-13	K Shoemark	93
8 (7)	154203 **MISS YECHANCE** 20 (D) K R Burke 8-11	J Nicholls (3)	91
9 (19)	-31102 **TRICKY TEL** 25 (D) H Palmer 8-10	J Hart	89
10 (2)	311 **ZAIN PRIMUS** 92 (D) J Butler 8-9	R Dawson	95
11 (10)	5-2000 **STARGAZED** 25 (V,D) K R Burke 8-7	W Fentiman (3)	99
12 (4)	401100 **ONE AND GONE** 3 (D) I Williams 8-6	K O'Neill	86
13 (12)	030-60 **OLD IS GOLD** 20 (V,BF,D) A Balding 8-5	S Osborne	81
14 (5)	114350 **SHES GOT A BROTHER** 20 (D) M & D Easterby 8-5	Joanna Mason	93
15 (3)	0-0004 **UNDERWRITER** 25 Michael Keady 8-5	L Morris	83
16 (8)	031535 **MIGHTY MAGNUS** 19 (D) M Dods 8-4	C Hardie	86
17 (16)	13-152 **DOLOS DREAM** 26 (BF,D) I Furtado 8-2	S De Sousa	82
18 (17)	000040 **BOSTON DAN** 16 (D) T Easterby 8-2	D Fentiman	75
19 (6)	210260 **CALL MARGOT** 20 (D) G Tutty 8-2	C Planas	80

7-2 Naana's Shadow, 7-1 Zain Primus, 8-1 Miss Yechance, 10-1 Schrodinger's Cat, Manatee Mehmas, 12-1 Baker Blue, Tricky Tel, Poatan, Dolos Dream.

Wright choice: Stargazed is fitted with a visor to sharpen her up after missing the break at Chester **Dangers:** Zain Primus, Schrodinger's Cat

5.20 Sky Bet Nursery
(2-Y-O: £51,540: 6f) (22)

1 (8)	100 **RULER'S PRIDE** 21 K R Burke 9-9	J Doyle	90
2 (5)	42111 **HAVANA SPRITE** 18 (D) J Tate 9-8	H Crouch	♦92
3 (22)	210 **CRYSTAL QUEEN** 63 R & P Fahey 9-5	W Fentiman (3)	91
4 (11)	106 **GOD GIVEN TALENT** 33 (T,D) W Haggas 9-5	T Marquand	87
5 (20)	4312 **DUBAI CHAMPION** 19 B Haslam 9-3	R L Moore	88
6 (14)	200 **SAVAGE MARINER** 22 (B) H Palmer 9-3	C T Keane	72
7 (4)	5100 **PERSIAN SPRING** 19 (CD) R Hannon 9-2	P Dobbs	87
8 (16)	3104 **SOVEREIGN GLORY** 19 C Hills 9-2	K Shoemark	85
9 (17)	1050 **UNDERDOG** 33 R Spencer 9-1	S Osborne	87
10 (9)	412 **JUMEIRAH STORM** 27 (P,D) W Knight 9-0	N Callan	85
11 (12)	14 **PEACEFUL WARRIOR** 40 (D) K Ryan 9-0	J P Spencer	84
12 (18)	2015 **ELEVATING** 5 R Hannon 9-0	J Leavy	84
13 (13)	314 **TOWELONTHETERRACE** 23 (D) J Candlish 8-13	J Hart	83
14 (2)	4420 **THE DANCING PIRATE** 19 (P,BF) A Balding 8-13	O Murphy	86
15 (15)	52331 **RLASTHOPE** 27 (D) T Coyle & K Wood 8-10	R Dawson	82
16 (6)	6221 **HENLEY ON THAMES** 18 (D) K P De Foy 8-9	D Egan	79
17 (7)	54156 **SUPER TUSCAN** 19 (D) E J-Houghton 8-9	O Carmichael (7)	85
18 (19)	5023 **NOTE TO SELF** 22 J & T Gosden 8-9	S Foley	80
19 (3)	350 **FANTASY FORCE** 25 (P) A Keatley 8-7	S De Sousa	77
20 (10)	414 **BEAR LEE** 25 M & D Easterby 8-6	Joanna Mason	76
21 (1)	650 **SUE'S LAST CHANCE** 53 R & P Fahey 8-5	C Hardie	78
22 (21)	0121 **BRANDENBURG** 33 (D) Mrs A Duffield 8-5	L Morris	75

13-2 Havana Sprite, 7-1 Dubai Champion, 8-1 The Dancing Pirate, 10-1 God Given Talent, 12-1 Sovereign Glory, Henley On Thames, Ruler's Pride, Note To Self, Brandenburg.

Wright choice: Havana Sprite showed a brilliant turn of foot when winning at Newmarket; a 4lb rise is fair **Dangers:** Ruler's Pride, Henley On Thames

Carlisle

Rob Wright

2.05 Guadalevin
2.38 Peace Belle
3.13 Fate's Gambit
3.48 Hey Havana
4.20 Misunderstood
4.55 Yellow Diamonds
5.30 Ephron

Going: good, good to soft in places
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Racing TV**

2.05 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 6f) (7)

1 (3)	**ANGELIC MELODY** J Camacho 9-2	R Sexton
2 (5)	4 **DIAMOND NEW BAY** 26 (BF) K R Burke 9-2	S James
3 (6)	3246 **GUADALEVIN** 27 C Fellowes 9-2	P Bradley
4 (4)	**MA BLUSHIN ROSIE** A Keatley 9-2	B McHugh
5 (7)	65 **OH SO SLOW SLOTH** 9 (H) R Menzies 9-2	D Allan
6 (1)	54 **SARA'S SILVER GIRL** 28 M & D Easterby 9-2	B Garritty
7 (2)	**SAYIDAH BAHRA** K Ryan 9-2	T Eaves

2-1 Guadalevin, 5-2 Diamond New Bay, 9-2 Sayidah Bahra, 8-1 Ma Blushin Rosie, 10-1 Sara's Silver Girl, 12-1 Oh So Slow Sloth, 14-1 Angelic Melody.

2.38 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 3f) (4)

1 (2)	44 **PEACE BELLE** 39 J Candlish 5-9-10	A Mullen
2 (4)	12 **ALEATRIX** 19 (BF) R Beckett 3-9-9	P Mulrennan
3 (3)	33 **GREEN AREA** 54 C Johnston 3-9-2	C Beasley
4 (1)	**LAZY IN RED** D Whillans 3-9-2	O McSweeney

Evens Aleatrix, 11-8 Peace Belle, 13-2 Green Area, 33-1 Lazy In Red.

3.13 Handicap (Div I: £3,402: 7f) (10)

1 (1)	-6405 **WHY BECAUSE** 19 (H) P Midgley 4-9-12	D Nolan
2 (9)	00-00 **RENEWABLE DREAM** 32 J Wainwright 4-9-11	G Sanna (5)
3 (3)	-0040 **REENIE'S DREAM** 113 (W) B Smart 4-9-7	P Mulrennan
4 (8)	55003 **FATE'S GAMBIT** 26 R Carr 3-9-7	JP Sullivan
5 (10)	04-00 **ZOUS JUICE** 60 M & D Easterby 5-9-6	B Garritty
6 (7)	0-64 **BLAIRTUM NIGHT** 34 Miss L Perratt 4-9-5	D Allan
7 (6)	65206 **APRIL DIAMOND** 19 I Jardine 5-9-4	A Mullen
8 (2)	50600 **RAJAWAIL** 8 (B,T) B Rothwell 6-8-12	F McManoman
9 (4)	42404 **LONG SHOT** 19 (P) T Easterby 3-8-9	O McSweeney
10 (5)	60040 **RUNNINMAN** 19 (P) D Whillans 3-8-7	A Brookes

3-1 Reenie's Dream, 7-2 Why Because, 9-2 Long Shot, 6-1 Fate's Gambit, 8-1 Renewable Dream, 12-1 Zous Juice, April Diamond, 14-1 Blairtum Night.

3.48 Handicap (Div II: £3,402: 7f) (9)

1 (9)	00000 **STONEYWELL** 9 (H) Steph Hollinshead 4-9-12	T Eaves
2 (5)	04254 **BIG APPLE JACK** 3 M & D Easterby 4-9-9	B Garritty
3 (3)	060P0 **UNITER** 19 D Coakley 3-9-7	S James
4 (1)	40-05 **DANRANA** 18 (H) Fionn McSharry 3-9-6	H Russell
5 (7)	25252 **HEY HAVANA** 16 (V) G Harker 3-9-5	C Beasley
6 (8)	3-006 **TAGO MAGO** 16 (T) S England 3-9-5	S Gray
7 (2)	0-202 **SUPREME DANCER** 30 R & P Fahey 3-9-4	E Tindall (5)
8 (6)	00-05 **OUR NICOLA** 218 D & N Barron 4-8-12	W Pyle
9 (4)	40500 **AGRIC RANGER** 12 (P) T Easterby 3-8-9	O McSweeney

9-4 Hey Havana, 9-2 Big Apple Jack, Danrana, 5-1 Supreme Dancer, 10-1 Uniter, 12-1 Our Nicola, Tago Mago, 14-1 Stoneywell, 25-1 Agric Ranger.

4.20 Handicap (£5,496: 7f) (12)

1 (6)	51063 **HUNKY DORY** 20 (P) Miss L Perratt 4-9-9	P Bradley
2 (11)	06004 **MISUNDERSTOOD** 12 (H,D) D O'Meara 4-9-8	P Mulrennan
3 (5)	54011 **KING OF FURY** 23 (D) M Dods 6-9-8	C Beasley
4 (8)	00306 **COUNT PALATINE** 11 (CD) M Dods 5-9-7	S B Kirrane
5 (10)	55421 **COMMANDER OF LIFE** 27 (D) Jessica Macey 5-9-7	R Kavanagh (3)
6 (12)	60060 **LORD BERTIE** 26 (H,D) D O'Meara 6-9-7	M Winn
7 (4)	03406 **SON** 25 (BF,D) T Easterby 5-9-6	D Allan
8 (2)	6-261 **NATIVE INSTINCT** 50 (D) E Bethell 4-9-5	S James
9 (3)	11236 **LORD CAPULET** 41 (D) K Ryan 4-9-5	T Eaves
10 (9)	-3100 **HAVANA PRINCE** 88 (P,D) T Coyle & K Wood 5-9-4	D Nolan
11 (7)	20105 **GOLDEN STRIKE** 26 (V,D) R & P Fahey 5-9-3	E Tindall (5)
12 (1)	25-10 **VINCE LOMBARDI** 189 (C,D) S Spencer 7-9-1	S Farmer (5)

4-1 Native Instinct, 9-2 Commander Of Life, 6-1 King Of Fury, 15-2 Misunderstood, 8-1 Son, Golden Strike, Hunky Dory, 14-1 Lord Capulet, Count Palatine.

4.55 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,187: 6f) (8)

1 (5)	10325 **MAXIMUM VELOCITY** 12 (P) N Tinkler 9-9	A Jary (3)
2 (8)	44452 **YELLOW DIAMONDS** 12 J Camacho 9-8	R Sexton
3 (3)	0436 **KILMAC AIR** 77 J & S Quinn 9-2	D Costello
4 (7)	02005 **OASIS COVER** 8 M Hammond 9-2	A Brookes
5 (6)	30106 **HARES BREDTH** 18 (T,D) T Easterby 9-0	D Allan
6 (4)	6460 **HEATHERS FEATHER** 19 T Waggott 8-13	B McHugh
7 (1)	03465 **NORTHERN TEMPEST** 44 (W,T) M Dods 8-12	C Beasley
8 (2)	24000 **DREAM FOREVER** 90 (B) J O'Keeffe 8-4	JP Sullivan

2-1 Yellow Diamonds, 7-2 Maximum Velocity, 9-2 Kilmac Air, 11-2 Hares Bredth, 13-2 Northern Tempest, 16-1 Oasis Cover, 20-1 others.

5.30 Handicap (£4,187: 1m) (11)

1 (6)	-6011 **BETWEEN ME AND U** 20 (T,D) M Herrington 5-10-2	D Allan
2 (8)	33324 **BARLEY** 4 (P,CD) T Easterby 7-10-1	S B Kirrane
3 (11)	-5231 **KEEP AN EYE ON IT** 9 (D) T Coyle & K Wood 3-9-13(6ex)	D Nolan
4 (2)	01340 **AVATAR JET** 27 (D) D Carroll 5-9-12	Z Wheatley
5 (7)	02151 **HOSTILITY** 8 (CD) D O'Meara 4-9-11	C Whiteley (5)
6 (10)	15201 **EPHRON** 18 (D) G Tutty 3-9-10	C Beasley
7 (4)	01334 **RAVISHING BEAUTY** 13 (V,CD) J O'Keeffe 5-9-10	J Garritty
8 (1)	63203 **BLUFFERONTHEBUS** 47 (CD) Craig Lidster 5-9-8	S James
9 (3)	1-630 **BECKON** 9 (D) S Corbett 3-9-6	T Eaves
10 (9)	56530 **PRINCESS NIYLA** 7 (P,D) A Brown 6-9-6	P Mulrennan
11 (5)	5000- **CAPTAIN CORELLI** 272 (W,P,CD) J Camacho 9-9-4	T Kiely-Marshall (5)

100-30 Keep An Eye On It, 7-2 Between Me And U, 9-2 Hostility, 13-2 Barley, Ephron, 12-1 Avatar Jet, Ravishing Beauty, 16-1 Princess Niyla.

Kempton Park

Rob Wright

5.25 Withtearsinmyeyes
5.58 Dream On Kent
6.30 Algaihabane
7.00 Feelin' Free
7.30 Lake Como
8.00 Exposure
8.30 Rogue Defence
9.00 Santiago Boy

Going: standard to slow
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Racing TV**

5.25 Maiden Stakes
(£5,400: 7f) (9)

1 (8)	**DREAM OF ALBION** A Perrett 3-9-7	D Probert
2 (3)	**MILE END ROAD** James Owen 3-9-7	C Fallon
3 (2)	**PALLISER** A Watson 3-9-7	P-L Jamin
4 (6)	56 **VINCENZO BELLINI** 15 M Loughnane 3-9-7	Hope Regan (7)
5 (5)	0-46 **GRANITEVILLE** 124 M Botti 3-9-2	M Ghiani
6 (7)	3-452 **MERRY** 19 James Horton 3-9-2	D Muscutt
7 (9)	6- **RIVER NILE** 354 A Balding 3-9-2	C Hutchinson
8 (4)	5 **SPAREAPENNY** 35 P Owens 3-9-2	B Sayette
9 (1)	223 **WITHTEARSINMYEYES** 93 J Channon 3-9-2	B Loughnane

9-4 Withtearsinmyeyes, 5-2 Graniteville, 7-2 Merry, 8-1 River Nile, 10-1 Mile End Road, 16-1 Dream Of Albion, 20-1 Palliser, 33-1 Spareapenny, Vincenzo Bellini.

5.58 Nursery
(2-Y-O: £3,140: 7f) (13)

1 (1)	050 **SAKOWIN** 66 (W) R Hughes 9-9	F Marsh
2 (3)	506 **NO MORE PINO** 40 Charlie Pike 9-9	S C Cronin (5)
3 (7)	3063 **KOCHELLA** 14 Henry Dwyer (AUS) 9-8	H Davies
4 (13)	446 **BEACH AHEAD** 14 (T) G & J Moore 9-7	T Moore (7)
5 (4)	030 **HAVANA COURT** 28 W Knight 9-6	C Fallon
6 (6)	02260 **DREAM ON KENT** 22 (T,V) P Evans 9-6	J F Egan
7 (8)	406 **CHILLI** 34 (H) E J-Houghton 9-6	C Bishop
8 (2)	600 **PERFECT HOPE** 26 T Ward 9-3	S M Levey
9 (11)	0050 **TEN YEAR STRETCH** 22 J Osborne 9-2	W Carver
10 (10)	060 **PRINTING MONEY** 49 (B,T) D Cunha 9-2	S Donohoe
11 (9)	000 **AMINATY** 20 (P) A Balding 8-13	D Muscutt
12 (5)	0000 **ALPACA'S BULLET** 36 Adam Kirby 8-9	T Heard
13 (12)	0406 **THE KALONJI MAN** 42 (B) R Hannon 8-6	S D Bowen

3-1 Kochella, 4-1 Chilli, 8-1 Havana Court, Aminaty, 10-1 Beach Ahead, Sakowin, 12-1 Dream On Kent, 16-1 others.

6.30 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (13)

1 (13)	1 **SONIC ANGEL** 19 S & E Crisford 9-11	J Mitchell
2 (4)	**ALGAIHABANE** J & T Gosden 9-4	B Sayette
3 (8)	60 **CARROW ROAD** 44 C Banham 9-4	J Haynes
4 (6)	**GIVE HAND** Harry Charlton 9-4	L Edmunds
5 (1)	**HOSHI** A King 9-4	D Probert
6 (2)	**LIBERTY'S HALL** James Owen 9-4	C Fallon
7 (10)	**PERFECT HEIR** A Balding 9-4	J Watson
8 (12)	**SHADDOCK** R Beckett 9-4	R Clutterbuck
9 (5)	**STYTCH** A King 9-4	C Bishop
10 (11)	052 **THUNDER HOME** 27 James Horton 9-4	B Loughnane
11 (9)	**TIME TO CLIMB** S C Williams 9-4	M Ghiani
12 (7)	**UNCLE ZELLO** J Channon 9-4	G Bass
13 (3)	**LADY NENAZ** T Ward 8-13	S M Levey

5-2 Sonic Angel, 3-1 Thunder Home, 5-1 Algaihabane, 8-1 Hoshi, 12-1 Shaddock, 14-1 Uncle Zello, Liberty's Hall, Perfect Heir.

7.00 Novice Stakes
(£5,400: 1m 4f) (12)

1 (11)	45 **BANKATARY** 23 James Owen 4-9-9	C Fallon
2 (1)	4/ **GOLD HILL** 680 (H) S Bradstock 4-9-9	W Cox
3 (6)	40 **TIDE LINES** 42 C Johnston 5-9-8	C Shepherd
4 (7)	2 **LUCY THE WIRE** 23 (P,BF) James Owen 4-9-4	B Loughnane
5 (5)	0-0 **WESTENDER** 14 D Menuisier 3-9-4	S M Levey
6 (2)	6 **WRECK IT RONNIE** 14 Charlie Pike 3-9-4	T Greatrex
7 (10)	50 **ARKLAN** 14 E J-Houghton 3-9-2	C Bishop
8 (8)	432 **LIBERATE** 14 (BF) Harry Eustace 3-9-2	P-L Jamin
9 (12)	0-0 **ESHOWE** 23 (H) E Smyth-Osbourne 3-9-0	Georgia Dobie
10 (3)	4 **QUIET SUMMER** 116 A Balding 3-9-0	D Muscutt
11 (4)	2 **FEELIN' FREE** 63 Jack Jones 3-8-9	T Moore (7)
12 (9)	4-226 **ST HILDA** 46 M Tregoning 3-8-9	D Probert

2-1 St Hilda, 9-4 Liberate, 4-1 Feelin' Free, 8-1 Lucy The Wire, 10-1 Bankatary, 16-1 Wreck It Ronnie, 25-1 Gold Hill, Quiet Summer.

7.30 Handicap
(Div I: £6,281: 1m) (10)

1 (1)	06261 **PERCY'S LAD** 7 (C,D) D & C Kubler 8-10-7(4ex)	E Nader
2 (7)	056-6 **MR PROFESSOR** 95 (CD) K P De Foy 7-10-4	T Moore (7)
3 (9)	25043 **BREAKDANCER** 11 (C,D) S & E Crisford 4-10-0	J Mitchell
4 (3)	-3406 **LAKE COMO** 74 (P,D) G Boughey 3-9-12	B Loughnane
5 (10)	-1006 **DARN HOT GALLOP** 33 (D) J Tate 3-9-10	L Edmunds
6 (8)	2231 **LUCKY CAMINO** 39 (D) H Palmer 3-9-9	D Probert
7 (2)	53-6 **NIGHT WOLF** 112 (P) S Spencer 3-9-7	D Swift
8 (4)	3-612 **CHAPTER** 33 (B) C Hills 3-9-6	J Watson
9 (6)	26511 **VICTORY ACE** 14 (C,D) J Butler 3-9-4	S M Levey
10 (5)	0FP00 **LILI MARLEEN** 7 (D) Jack Jones 4-8-13	P-L Jamin

7-2 Lucky Camino, 4-1 Percy's Lad, 5-1 Victory Ace, 6-1 Breakdancer, 13-2 Chapter, 8-1 Lake Como, 10-1 Mr Professor, 12-1 Darn Hot Gallop.

8.00 Handicap
(Div II: £6,281: 1m) (10)

1 (1)	3-011 **RACINGBREAKS RYDER** 7 (C,D) C Hills 6-10-4(5ex)	J Watson
2 (3)	5-043 **EXPOSURE** 19 (D) J & T Gosden 4-10-2	B Sayette
3 (10)	33112 **DISTINCT SPIRIT** 12 (D) D & C Kubler 6-10-0	E Nader
4 (2)	51-15 **FIGHT YOUR CORNER** 25 (BF,CD) J Tate 5-9-12	B Loughnane
5 (6)	-5033 **ELAN D'OR** 13 (CD) S C Williams 3-9-10	M Ghiani
6 (7)	0-050 **HERCULEUS** 48 (P,D) W Muir & C Grassick 4-9-8	L Edmunds
7 (4)	1-005 **STARLIGHT TIME** 18 (D) R Varian 3-9-7	R P Downey
8 (5)	52420 **LUZON HEIGHTS** 40 (D) W Knight 3-9-4	C Fallon
9 (8)	-1655 **CAPTAIN FOX** 14 (D) R Hughes 3-9-2	F Marsh
10 (9)	5503- **DOUBLE EAGLE** 314 (T) M Wigham 3-8-5	J F Egan

7-2 Distinct Spirit, 4-1 Exposure, 5-1 Racingbreaks Ryder, 13-2 Fight Your Corner, 8-1 Double Eagle, 10-1 Luzon Heights, Elan D'or, 14-1 others.

8.30 Handicap
(Div III: £6,281: 1m) (9)

1 (7)	-2341 **CAVOLO NERO** 70 (D) Harry Eustace 4-10-4	Kaiya Fraser
2 (5)	10-01 **MALACHY'S WISH** 8 J Osborne 3-10-1(6ex)	W Carver
3 (2)	32604 **HELM ROCK** 40 (B,T,CD) D & C Kubler 8-10-0	E Nader
4 (8)	02066 **TALIS EVOLVERE** 13 (CD) R Hannon 6-9-11	S M Levey
5 (6)	151 **ROGUE DEFENCE** 44 (D) Jack Jones 3-9-10	B Loughnane
6 (1)	61004 **PORT ROAD** 11 (CD) S Dow 5-9-8	T Heard
7 (3)	0/2-0 **ROYALE GOODNIGHT** 123 (H,C) Harry Charlton 4-9-6	Millie Wonnacott (5)
8 (9)	30-00 **WHITE CROWN STAR** 23 (C) I Williams 4-9-4	C Bishop
9 (4)	0-005 **PORT ERIN** 51 (CD) A Carroll 6-9-1	J Doughty

3-1 Malachy's Wish, 100-30 Rogue Defence, 7-2 Cavolo Nero, 8-1 Helm Rock, Talis Evolvere, 10-1 Royale Goodnight, 14-1 Port Road, 16-1 others.

9.00 Handicap
(3-Y-O: £4,187: 7f) (11)

1 (3)	32136 **SLACK BOB** 44 (D) E Dunlop 9-9	M Ghiani
2 (5)	05402 **SANTIAGO BOY** 9 (B) C Hills 9-9	J Watson
3 (9)	440-0 **G'EMMETHEGREENLITE** 116 (T) S Spencer 9-6	D Swift
4 (1)	10003 **UNIONVILLE** 26 M Attwater 9-6	W Carson
5 (8)	-0156 **OBSIDIAN VERSE** 33 J Fanshawe 9-6	C Shepherd
6 (2)	0-244 **EDUARDO CALDERON** 46 Harry Eustace 9-6	Kaiya Fraser
7 (4)	03505 **GENEROUS RASCAL** 19 (B,C) D Cunha 9-6	R Clutterbuck
8 (10)	60154 **STATION BAR** 15 (B) E J-Houghton 9-5	C Bishop
9 (7)	4-026 **STRONG VOICE** 27 (P,T) James Horton 9-4	J Mitchell
10 (6)	4-502 **PIAZZA** 15 Ollie Sangster 9-4	D Muscutt
11 (11)	36542 **VIVIANA** 8 C Johnston 9-1	B Loughnane

7-2 Viviana, 9-2 Santiago Boy, 6-1 Piazza, 8-1 Eduardo Calderon, Generous Rascal, 10-1 Obsidian Verse, Strong Voice, Slack Bob.

Worcester

Rob Wright

5.02 Muskerry Rock
5.33 Mr Mcwhinny
6.03 Sparkling Water
6.38 Handmedownastar
7.08 Starshine Legend
7.38 Ghost Jury
8.08 Mancero

Going: good **Sky Sports Racing**

5.02 Handicap Chase (£4,700: 2m 7f) (6)

1	1F-12 **SMUGGLERS HAVEN** 43 (BF) S Bradstock 7-11-12	Miss L Bradstock (7)
2	163-5 **PALAMON** 24 (T) D Skelton 6-11-12	T Durrell
3	-1221 **MUSKERRY ROCK** 37 (B,P,D) D Skelton 7-11-12	H Skelton
4	6-P20 **KING ROLY** 32 (B,T) M Bowen 7-11-11	J Bowen
5	20-24 **HARRYS HOPE** 28 (P,D) B Pauling 8-11-3	B R Jones
6	P-232 **YES DAY** 32 (B) J & A O'Neill 8-11-2	B Macey (5)

6-5 Muskerry Rock, 7-2 Smugglers Haven, 5-1 King Roly, 7-1 Harrys Hope, 8-1 Yes Day, 16-1 Palamon.

5.33 Handicap Chase
(£3,248: 2m 110yd) (10)

1	20-34 **TURPIN GOLD** 49 T Lacey 10-12-0	S Sheppard
2	5-245 **DEFINITE DREAM** 38 (T) D Coakley 8-11-12	B J Powell
3	3-340 **ALSHADHIAN** 26 (P,T,D) O Greenall & J Guerriero 6-11-10	J Tudor
4	4-663 **IOLAOS DU MOU** 26 (H) T Culhane & S Barclay 8-11-6	Tabitha Worsley
5	0-464 **DEXTER** 32 (P,T,D) O Greenall & J Guerriero 9-11-5	T Wynne
6	P0153 **GREER HILL** 28 (P,T,CD) J Candlish 5-11-3	W Shanahan (5)
7	031-3 **HIERO SPORT** 87 (H,T,BF) A Hales 9-10-13	K Woods
8	0-141 **MR MCWHINNY** 32 (T,D) T Ellis 8-10-11	J Andrews
9	P-P65 **KEEP ME POSTED** 34 (P,T) M Sheppard 9-10-8	H Bannister
10	-2322 **GETAWAY JEWEL** 32 (D) M Hammond 12-10-4	B Hughes

13-8 Mr Mcwhinny, 13-2 Turpin Gold, 7-1 Iolaos Du Mou, 15-2 Getaway Jewel, 8-1 Hiero Sport, 10-1 Greer Hill, 12-1 others.

6.03 Maiden Hurdle (£5,446: 2m) (15)

1	/41P- **BLUE TOPAZ** 279 (T) F O'Brien 6-11-7	J Hogan
2	44-1 **DATSTHEHOLYALLOFIT** 105 (D) P Neville 5-11-7	B Hughes
3	20/0 **DO WAH DIDDY** 88 N & W Twiston-Davies 5-11-7	A Jackson-Fennell (7)
4	0-46 **DREAMING OF THE DR** 26 (H) Dr R Newland 5-11-7	L Scott (3)
5	3-332 **ELATED** 47 (P) B Pauling 5-11-7	B R Jones
6	6 **EVENLY** 69 D McCain 5-11-7	T Gillard
7	P3-11 **LADY BEE GREAT** 86 M Sheppard 7-11-7	S Sheppard
8	222P/ **NALA THE LIONESS** F36 (T) D Killahena & G McPherson 6-11-7	N Slatter (3)
9	P42-1 **SPARKLING WATER** 26 (H,D) D Skelton 5-11-7	H Skelton
10	3/56- **SWEET HONEY B** 219 C Boultbee-Brooks 8-11-7	R McLernon
11	P0- **WHINNY HOUSTON** 420 Sheila Lewis 5-11-7	S Houlihan
12	0 **MATILDA MAID** 69 S Bradstock 4-11-4	D Wiliams (7)
13	U50 **PEARL KNOT** 26 O Greenall & J Guerriero 4-11-4	T Wynne
14	233 **TAKE THE BOAT** 31 G Nicholls 4-11-4	H Bannister
15	6 **ADBA** 24 Faye Bramley 3-10-2	H Kimber

9-4 Sparkling Water, 4-1 Datstheholyallofit, 7-1 Take The Boat, Elated, 10-1 Blue Topaz, 12-1 Dreaming Of The Dr, Sweet Honey B, 14-1 Nala The Lioness.

6.38 Novices' Hurdle (£5,446: 2m 4f) (12)

1	03-11 **NEWBROOK DIAMOND** 32 (B,D) G Elliott (Ire) 6-11-12	S Bowen
2	21-1 **ROAD TO WEMBLEY** 96 (T) O Murphy 5-11-12	T Walsh (7)
3	30-11 **SQUARE D'ALBONI** 34 (C) D Skelton 4-11-8	H Skelton
4	31-05 **BRIGHT LEGEND** 24 (D) Faye Bramley 6-11-7	J O'Neill (7)
5	132-1 **HANDMEDOWNASTAR** 87 Nick Scholfield 6-11-7	H Cobden
6	3-221 **ONEINTHEWELL** 32 (P) James Owen 5-11-7	J J Burke
7	-4221 **PHANTOM GOLD** 34 (CD) J Candlish 8-11-7	L Scott (3)
8	1PPP- **CADILLAC RANCH** 135 L Morgan 6-11-0	Miss E Callwood (7)
9	30-3 **NOT NOW** 52 (P) N & W Twiston-Davies 5-11-0	S Twiston-Davies
10	-1022 **SHESONNET** 34 B Case 5-11-0	H Bannister
11	0-0 **DELGANY HEADLINE** 28 D Skelton 4-10-10	T Durrell
12	212 **LIKEWHATYOUSEE** 26 J & A O'Neill 4-10-10	R McLernon

3-1 Newbrook Diamond, 7-2 Road To Wembley, 9-2 Square D'alboni, 15-2 Handmedownastar, 8-1 Likewhatyousee, 10-1 Oneinthewell, 12-1 others.

7.08 Handicap Hurdle
(Div I: £3,248: 2m 4f) (10)

1	350 **STARSHINE LEGEND** 28 (P) O Murphy 5-12-0	S Bowen
2	1PP-5 **MIDNIGHT JEWEL** 28 (P,CD) C Longsdon 10-11-10	Lilly Pinchin
3	0025- **MRS BIDDLE** 284 K Woollacott 8-11-6	H Cobden
4	0P-60 **IAMCELESTIALGIFT** 40 (B,T) D Killahena & G McPherson 8-11-4	N Slatter (3)
5	5-P51 **WARNER'S CROSS** 24 (H,D) Mrs S Leech 9-11-2	H Reed
6	4F243 **GONE IN SIXTY** 28 (D) A Hales 9-10-12	K Woods
7	P0P0- **COULD BE YOU** 120 (W) N Mulholland 6-10-10	B Harris (3)
8	5-6U3 **DYNAMITE DEFENSE** 49 S-J Davies 5-10-8	J Best
9	-P532 **BABYCHINO** 38 A Gibbons 4-10-4	Ms S Carter (7)
10	P60-6 **LUCKY IN TAIPAN** 38 B Pauling 6-10-2	B R Jones

5-2 Warner's Cross, 5-1 Babychino, 6-1 Starshine Legend, Gone In Sixty, 7-1 Mrs Biddle, 10-1 Lucky In Taipan, 12-1 Could Be You, 14-1 others.

7.38 Handicap Hurdle
(Div II: £3,248: 2m 4f) (10)

1	05-60 **BANNISTER** 26 (C) N Kent 9-12-0	T Broughton (3)
2	4-134 **BOUND FOR GLORY** 28 R Stephens 4-11-12	C Gethings
3	000-3 **CRAFTY GAEL** 24 (P,T,BF) O Murphy 7-11-9	S Bowen
4	-55P3 **ROYAL RHYTHM** 34 (B) J & A O'Neill 10-11-7	R McLernon
5	-45R3 **USYK** 38 N & W Twiston-Davies 5-11-5	A Jackson-Fennell (7)
6	600-P **BOSKILL BORDEN** 28 (V) D Rees 7-11-0	S Fenelon (5)
7	235-4 **ONEHUNDREDNEIGHTY** 91 (BF) B Pauling 6-10-12	B R Jones
8	-1252 **GHOST JURY** 47 K Woollacott 7-10-10	H Cobden
9	00-52 **BROOKLYN LULLABY** 50 M & D Easterby 6-10-6	H Bannister
10	000-0 **COSMIC SPIRIT** 64 (H,T) B Case 4-10-2	J Stevenson (7)

7-2 Ghost Jury, 4-1 Crafty Gael, 5-1 Royal Rhythm, 11-2 Onehundredneighty, 6-1 Bound For Glory, 7-1 Brooklyn Lullaby, 8-1 Usyk, 25-1 others.

8.08 Handicap Hurdle (£3,248: 2m 7f) (17)

1	5-12P **CINNODIN** 57 (P,D) J Snowden 6-12-0	G Sheehan
2	13-05 **BACK IN THE BAY** 43 James Owen 7-12-0	J J Burke
3	-1B25 **OCTOBER HILL** 4 (P,T) D Pipe 6-11-13	Doubtful
4	1-234 **FISKARDO** 24 (T) M Bowen 6-11-12	S Fenelon (5)
5	-5316 **MISTRAL BLUE** 26 (D) F O'Brien 8-11-11	Fern O'Brien (5)
6	6-000 **BETTY'S TIARA** 26 (B,T,D) B Pauling 8-11-10	B R Jones
7	5-145 **REDBRIDGE RAMBLER** 32 (P) M Keighley 8-11-9	F Keighley
8	0-561 **STILETTO** 40 (P,CD) Mrs S Leech 8-11-9	H Cobden
9	4-314 **FINAL ENTRY** 34 (T,V) D Pipe 5-11-8	J Tudor
10	-6353 **ATREIDES** 34 (T,V) N Mulholland 8-11-8	L Gallacher (10)
11	5-05P **KENZO DES BRUYERES** 26 (V) M Bowen 6-11-7	J Bowen
12	-35P3 **BARRY FIFE** 28 (V) G Hanmer 7-11-7	S Twiston-Davies
13	0P-61 **THE GREAT ESCAPE** 34 (CD) J & A O'Neill 6-11-6	R McLernon
14	41P21 **MANCERO** 28 (B,CD) D Pipe 4-11-2	S Bowen
15	33-P3 **IKIGAI STAR** 34 C Longsdon 6-11-1	D Bass
16	P000- **FARHH ECHO** 122 (P,T) D J Jeffreys 5-10-9	L Harrison
17	P0P-0 **SIMS' LAW** 67 (T) J & A O'Neill 5-10-2	B Macey (5)

3-1 Mancero, 11-2 Stiletto, 7-1 The Great Escape, Fiskardo, 10-1 Ikigai Star, Cinnodin, Final Entry, 14-1 Mistral Blue, Atreides.

Yesterday's racing results

Chepstow

Going: Good to Firm

2.15 (1m 4f) 1, **Hope Rising** (Rob Hornby, 1-16 fav); 2, Sneaky Blinder (6-1). 24l. Jamie Snowden.

2.45 (5f 16yd) 1, **Impulsive Spirit** (Rob Hornby, 14-1); 2, Kokumi (11-1); 3, Soeur De Flash (2-1 fav). 8 ran. nk, 1¼l . P D Evans.

3.15 (7f 16yd) 1, **Avionics** (Tom Marquand, 13-2); 2, Grove Street (2-5 fav); 3, Talamon (11-1). 5 ran. nk, 5½l. A M Balding.

3.50 (1m 14yd) 1, **Rating** (Rossa Ryan, 7-2); 2, Risen Again (17-2); 3, Scarfo (7-1). 8 ran. 1¼l, 1¼l. G Harris.

4.25 (7f 16yd) 1, **Too Much Trevor** (Ashley Lewis, 9-1); 2, Von Trotter (11-4 fav); 3, Espona Bay (7-2). 7 ran. nk, 2l. G Harris.

5.00 (6f 16yd) 1, **Arnaz** (Billy Loughnane, 6-5 fav); 2, Some Nightmare (11-1); 3, Connie's Rose (5-1). 10 ran. 4l, 3½l. D M Loughnane.

Placepot: £23.40
Quadpot: £9.50

Lingfield Park

Going: Standard

2.30 (1m 7f 169yd) 1, **Diamond Bay** (Mr Henry Callan, 9-4); 2, Benvoy (20-1); 3, Beaune (12-1). 7 ran. NR: Wise Counsellor. 1l, 27½l. T Ward.

3.00 (6f 1yd) 1, **Musical Force** (David Probert, 13-2); 2, Romotoso (8-11); 3, Enriched (11-2). 9 ran. NR: Last Dandelion. 17½l, hd. Harry Eustace.

3.33 (1m 4f) 1, **Charles Morin** (Paddy Bradley, 9-2); 2, Someone's Wish (11-1); 3, Fighting Poet (10-1). 10 ran. 1¼l, ns. P Phelan.

4.08 (1m 1yd) 1, **Perfect Ruler** (Marco Ghiani, 11-4); 2, Ernie Mccrew (25-1); 3, My Old Mate (10-11 fav). 7 ran. ½l, 1l. M Botti.

4.45 (7f 1yd) 1, **Hold The Press** (Marco Ghiani, 40-1); 2, Victory Sound (4-1); 3, Coiled (150-1). 12 ran. 17½l, ¾l. J R Jenkins.

5.20 (7f 1yd) 1, **Rovinia** (Marco Ghiani, 5-6); 2, Vitalline (11-1); 3, Ruiz (80-1). 10 ran. NR: Megaphone. 17½l, 1½l. R A Teal.

5.52 (6f 1yd) 1, **Balon D'or** (Paddy Bradley, 7-2); 2, Happier (3-1); 3, Dashing Donkey (5-2). 9 ran. NR: Porfin. hd, nk. S Dow.

6.22 (6f 1yd) 1, **Von Krolock** (Christian Howarth, 6-1); 2, My Mate Kev (9-4); 3, Chasing Gold (4-1). 8 ran. NR: Unico. 2¼l, 17½l. James Owen.

Placepot: £550.70
Quadpot: £204.80

Wolverhampton

Going: Standard

5.30 (1m 1f 104yd) 1, **Franschhoek** (Kaiya Fraser, 8-15 fav); 2, Saifo (9-4); 3, Astrid (33-1). 6 ran. nk, 37½l. J R Fanshawe.

6.00 (7f 36yd) 1, **Javelot** (S De Sousa, 1-1 fav); 2, Peaberry (4-1); 3, L B Double U (4-1). 12 ran. nk, 3¼l. M Botti.

6.30 (7f 36yd) 1, **Spaceman** (O J Orr, 2-1; **Rob Wright's nap**); 2, Inside Story (3-1); 3, Padua (14-1). 9 ran. NR: Haaderr. 1½l, sh. R A Fahey.

7.00 (1m 142yd) 1, **Goldie Trickett** (D Egan, 13-2); 2, Sunshine And Roses (5-1); 3, Albertini Star (22-1). 9 ran. NR: Sailor's Return. ¾l, 2¼l. Jane Chapple-Hyam.

7.30 (6f 20yd) 1, **Fizzy Cristal** (Warren Fentiman, 10-1); 2, Acclaimed Freedom (11-10 fav); 3, Escape Plan (25-1). 8 ran. nk, 1½l. R A Fahey.

8.00 (1m 5f 219yd) 1, **Heroics** (Oisin Murphy, 5-4 fav); 2, Flash Kozo (7-2); 3, Dance Time (8-1). 9 ran. ¾l, 17½l. A King.

Placepot: £26.00
Quadpot: £18.90

Ngumoha set for major role – but second season is a test

Teenager likely to play more on right wing this term as Liverpool try to sign Bradley Barcola from PSG, writes **Paul Joyce**

It did not take long for Rio Ngumoha to realise that things will be different this season.

Just 20 minutes into Liverpool's opening friendly match against Sunderland, the sight of Dan Ballard stepping across the winger's path, a blatant body check sending his rival to the turf, was proof that the opponents caught out by the youngster's remarkable ascent last term are determined to be more prepared second time around. Sunday will bring with it further confirmation of how the landscape has changed.

The last time Ngumoha was at St James' Park, he announced himself to a worldwide audience by writing himself into the history books as the youngest goalscorer in Liverpool's history.

Watch the goal again and how he creeps into position towards the back post.

Never mind that no one from Newcastle United saw him move into shot to dispatch Mohamed Salah's cross following Dominik Szoboszlai's clever stepover. At that point, no one even knew him.

Yet when Ngumoha returns to Tyneside almost exactly a year on from sealing that 3-2 success with his first Premier League goal aged 16 years and 361 days, he will do so with his reputation preceding him.

He is now a Liverpool *and* England starlet. A place in Thomas Tuchel's pre-World Cup training camp gave way to a debut in the warm-up win over New Zealand and the chatter coming out of the England set-up was that Ngumoha had been so impressive during training that there were regrets he had not been selected in the actual squad for the tournament.

It would not serve as a jolt if he is named for the Nations League games with Spain, Czech Republic and Croatia at the end of next month and beginning of October.

If it feels like Ngumoha no longer has the element of surprise in his armoury, then that simply comes with the territory of second-season football. Staying one step ahead of the pack is part of the challenge and he is likely to embrace that.

For a start, it could be that he operates off the right flank more than the left this season. Ngumoha started the final pre-season friendly against Como in the role vacated by Salah and the ability to drive past opponents on the outside is something that the head coach Andoni Iraola wants as well as his wingers drifting inside.

Ngumoha's signature move would be to cut off the left onto his right foot and try to find the corner of the net which he did with aplomb when scoring his second Premier League goal against Fulham back in April.

However, Liverpool's pursuit of Bradley Barcola, the Paris Saint-Germain attacker, is with a view to playing him in his preferred position on the left.

Cody Gakpo is best suited to that side, Víctor Muñoz can play there, too, and Florian Wirtz often peels off to the left where he has been deployed by Germany.

"All the coaching staff are just telling me to play my normal game really, whether that's going inside or outside," Ngumoha said. "I've been working on it in training anyway, playing on the right and the left. Just being unpredictable really."

Versatility will be important if he is to play the minutes he craves as will his work rate off the ball in order to meet the demands of performing in Iraola's side. Liverpool will be attack-minded but will have to scamper back into position quickly or risk becoming too easy to play against.

Of course, while the Liverpool supporters serenade the teenager as something of a saviour, it stands to reason that he has elements of his game which must improve given his tender years.

Ngumoha was substituted against Como after an hour (Lewis Koumas was introduced on the right before he switched flanks to allow Muñoz to finish the 2-0 victory there) and working on his stamina is something that was highlighted last season as the former head coach Arne Slot gradually exposed him to more minutes.

By the end, Ngumoha had played the eighth most minutes of anyone aged 17 or under across Europe's top five leagues which, given Liverpool's tumultuous season was hardly conducive to blooding talent, speaks to the size of his potential.

These are all tasks he is not likely to shirk and he has already spoken about needing to add more goals and assists to his game.

Ngumoha's career has been mapped out meticulously and he recently explained during an in-house interview that his brother and agent, James, dropped out of education aged 17 to oversee his training every day.

He played in the same kids' team at Chelsea as Jamie Redknapp's son, Beau, and, on occasions, they played in the former England international's garden.

"His brother, who played a big part in his career, certainly his development, used to do a lot of one-on-one coaching with him," Redknapp told Sky Sports.

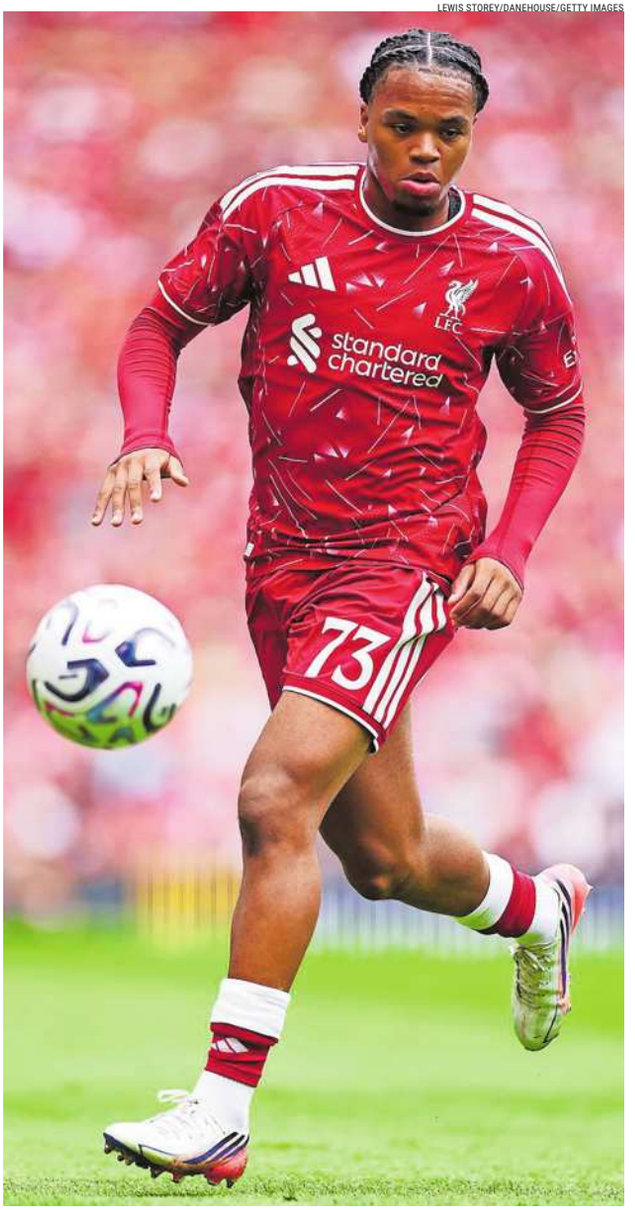
"He came over to my house a few times and I just watched how he worked with Rio. I've never seen a kid with such fast feet. But it was repetition after repetition and we speak so much now about a lot of these players perhaps don't get enough training at their own clubs.

"They do it with one-on-one coaches and there'd be probably nobody better, or nobody knows him better, than his older brother. So they worked extremely well together."

Ngumoha turns 18 at the end of the month and will be able to sign a five-year contract which should reflect the strides he has made over the last year.

The trip to Newcastle will reaffirm those, though it is the journey he must continue to undertake, together with the hurdles he must overcome, that will determine how high his star rises.

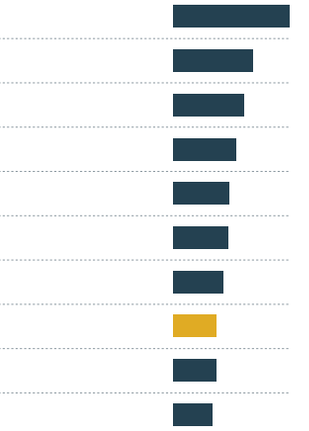
LEWIS STOREY/DANEHOUSE/GETTY IMAGES



Ngumoha's winning goal against Newcastle last August made him Liverpool's youngest ever goalscorer. He ended the season with two goals and one assist

Ngumoha among most-used 17-year-olds

Minutes played last season in Europe's big five leagues by players aged 17 and under



*On loan at Lecce

CONTINUED FROM BACK

'Fifa hit the self-destruct button'

pressed the self-destruct button, and the consequence of that flows now into the solutions that need to be found. [Fifa is] a not-for-profit organisation. They should be holding that competition in trust for the future of football."

Uefa, Concacaf and the Asian Football Confederation want Infantino to resign, and yesterday Israel joined the list of national federations to withdraw their support for the 56-year-old. He still has support in South America, Oceania and Africa, however.

Masters backed the FA's decision to withdraw its support for Infantino and believes harmony should be the focus in any search for a successor.

"I think an emerging unity candidate should have on his or her agenda, reform of Fifa, and perhaps even reform of the president's role and how it interacts with those things," he said. In a sign that the feud between Fifa and Uefa is only intensifying, Laura McAllister, one of Uefa's five vice-presidents, condemned the dismissal of Kevin Lamour as Fifa's chief operating officer. Lamour was fired on Monday, having been the first to break ranks in criticising Infantino's plan last month.

Uefa opposed Infantino's plan and is threatening a boycott of Fifa events. McAllister's statement yesterday suggests European football's governing body is not close to backing down.

"Kevin's sacking seriously weakens Fifa's administration, whilst undermining this unique opportunity to shift the culture at Fifa," McAllister, a former Wales international, said.

"The loss of a leader of Kevin's calibre sends a deeply troubling message to all of us seeking change."

Fifa was approached for comment in light of McAllister's statement.

Everton eyeing Grealish

Window watch

Paul Joyce, Charlotte Duncker, Gary Jacob

Everton's chief executive Angus Kinnear has confirmed interest in bringing Jack Grealish back to the club in a potential loan deal.

Grealish, 30, spent last season on loan at Hill Dickinson Stadium with Everton contributing about £12 million to cover the bulk of the Manchester City forward's salary. His campaign ended in January after he suffered a broken foot but he remained at Everton to begin his rehabilitation.

Grealish has entered the final year of his contract at the Etihad Stadium and it remains to be seen whether he will be in head coach Enzo Maresca's plans. In an interview with the Toffee TV fans' channel, Kinnear said: "We have been in touch across the summer. I think every club in the Premier League would be interested in a fit Jack Grealish."

Newcastle United have opened talks with City over their midfielder Nico González. The club are looking to strengthen in the middle of the pitch after Sandro Tonali and Bruno Guimarães left for Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal respectively.

Aston Villa are close to agreeing a deal to sign Aaron Wan-Bissaka on loan with an obligation to buy the West Ham United right back next summer.

The 28-year-old wanted to leave West Ham after their relegation from the Premier League and a medical is scheduled for the coming days.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

FSG sold 38% stake in Liverpool

Holdings to up its stake to a majority shareholding in the next 12 months, although FSG has said it is not committed to that agreement.

Bhatia, the former owner and director of Queens Park Rangers, had been in talks with FSG for more than a year after being introduced to the US owners by Will McDonough of Corestone Capital. McDonough was the former business manager of the NFL star Tom Brady.

Bezos, the third-richest man in the world, was subsequently invited to join the consortium along with Eduardo Saverin, co-founder of Facebook.

The deal remains subject to approval from the new Independent Football Regulator and those involved must pass the Premier League owners' and directors' test. That could take up to 90 days.

‘Ipswich was like a golf club – I wish I was there now it has all this cash’

Club’s former chairman David Sheepshanks on his pride in St George’s Park and getting through treatment for cancer. Interview by **Michael Grant**

NICHOLAS STRUGNELL FOR THE TIMES

Sheepshanks says he expects Ipswich to become established in the Premier League having spent significant money on players such as Enciso, below left

Old Suffolk class and hospitality is alive and well. David Sheepshanks, the lifelong Ipswich Town fan and long-serving former chairman, sends a text detailing all the trains and connections I need to reach the quaint station nearest his rural home. Then he is waiting there to pick me up before a few hours of chat and a lunch of homemade salmon sandwiches. When we’re done, and filled with coffee, he drives me back to the station and waits to make sure the train pulls in on time.

Something feels quintessentially Ipswich about this sort of warmth. Sheepshanks’s beloved club used to be run by those colourful *bon viveurs* John and Patrick Cobbold, the brothers who said their idea of a crisis was running out of white wine in the boardroom. When Sheepshanks took over as chairman in 1995 he ended decades of the Cobbolds’ benign dynasty. He tells a story of a game against Arsenal when the Portman Road boardroom was stocked with six bottles of gin, six bottles of whisky, six bottles of white wine, six bottles of red wine, and six sausage rolls. By the end of the day most of the booze was long gone but there were still five untouched sausage rolls. “And Patrick Cobbold held an inquest as to who the hell had eaten the one sausage roll.”

Happier, carefree times, when glasses could be raised to Ipswich Town winning cups at home and in Europe and regularly finishing in the top three. You feel the Premier League is richer for having them back this season. Sheepshanks, 73, was smitten by his first game, a 3-2 home win over Leyton Orient in 1966. “Once a blue, always a blue,” he says, six decades later. “Ipswich was a beautifully run club. But if I draw an analogy in the nicest possible way, it was sort of like a golf club. It was all quite staid and traditional. It needed modernising and professionalising.”

He was chairman from 1995 to 2009, a period in which the club became one of many buffeted and marginalised by the turbulence and unpredictability of football finance and the nascent Premier League. There were promotions and the thrill of taking on Inter Milan in Europe. “We took 9,500 fans to Milan. I’m standing in Piazza Duomo, where the cathedral is, with thousands and thousands of Suffolk people.” But also relegations and worse. The collapse of ITV Digital contributed to the tailspin of £54 million in debts and voluntary administration. “That was humiliating and awful and took a lot out of all of us.”

Ipswich spent 22 seasons outside the top flight and even dropped to League One. Clubs of comparable status overtook them and consolidated in the Premier League. “I look with envy today at the amount of interest in investing in English football from the American market and the Middle East and so forth. It’s huge. It just wasn’t there then. I spent four years searching for investors. Luckily the community backed me. I said I will take responsibility for what’s gone wrong and I will take responsibility for trying to put it right. And I think we did.” Eventually he struck a deal with the businessman Marcus Evans.

“We could have established Ipswich as like Brighton, Brentford or Bournemouth today. I mean, hats off to them, they’ve all done well. But they’ve got a lot of money behind them. It does feel tough. We could so easily have gone on and established ourselves like them, as I think we will now.”

Ipswich returned to the top flight in 2024 but were out of their depth and went straight back down. In May their manager Kieran McKenna secured promotion again before stepping down. Gary O’Neil will be in charge for Saturday’s opener at home to Sunderland. The club’s ownership and resources strike Sheepshanks as the difference-maker this time. Five years ago, Evans sold his controlling stake to the American investment fund ORG and the ownership was then split around other mainly US consortiums.

They have gone big this summer and splurged £152 million on new players, second only to Chelsea when it comes to net spend. The £26.5m deal for the 21-year-old Brazilian Emersonn was a club record, and Julio Enciso followed for only slightly less. Sheepshanks approved. “The club is unrecognisable because of the amount of money that’s being invested thanks to these American syndicates and [chairman] Mark Ashton’s efforts. I applaud Mark for maintaining standards. They have strong dress code standards in the boardroom and they uphold the traditions. They’re not the same. When you go to the club, you don’t feel it’s the same. It looks different, feels different. But it’s modern and it’s still very well done. And I’m proud of them for that.”

People will still rush to write them off. In Sheepshanks’s new autobiography he tells the story of his great pal John Dennis, the former Barnsley chairman, being cock-a-hoop at promotion. Ken Bates, his opposite number at Chelsea, dismissively pissed on his chips: “Well, John, enjoy your year.”

Ipswich are familiar with the sentiment. “We won’t mention any names, but there are a few pundit tossers who just say, ‘Well of course they’ll go down.’ They say it about us without having a clue about what we’re doing. The difference now is you’ve not only got a massive windfall for being in the Premier League, you’ve also got an equally massive capitalisation of the club, or funding of the club, which is probably just as big if not bigger. That is what is separating Ipswich out from some of the other promoted clubs.”

> “Gareth became a very good friend and I wished for him that he could have won. He deserved to win

His life has had sliding doors moments. He was Football League chairman for two years and stood unsuccessfully to lead the FA. The former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith asked him to stand in a safe Tory seat, which he considered before declining. In 2008 he lost out to Ivan Gazidis when Arsenal interviewed him to be chief executive. “I’m sure they made the right decision. When I look back on it, I’m not sure I went for it wholeheartedly because I was reticent about ever working for another club.”

The title of the autobiography is *Man on a Mission*. It might be said he has had three missions in his life and one of them — the most important he will ever have — came too late to make it into print. Firstly, Ipswich. Then the second love of his sporting life, England’s national football centre at St George’s Park. Along with Howard Wilkinson he was a key driver of the Burton-upon-Trent project and remains its biggest supporter. “I’m immensely proud of St George’s Park and what it is today. To have the chance to do something for your nation, for England, was an enormous honour and privilege. I think St George’s Park has been an enormous catalyst for the promotion of best practice and high performance. When you go there you feel … it is a special place.”

In his view, it has been central to England going the distance in international tournaments now. “Sarina Wiegman, two trophies. Gareth [Southgate], two finals. Now Thomas [Tuchel] a third place. We will get there. I am biased, but I think St George’s Park has been essential to that. I think it’s unthinkable that a major international team would function to its maximum potential without it. On a personal note, Gareth became a very good friend and I wished for him that he could have won. The world’s unfair. He deserved to win.”

Sheepshanks has always imagined “SGP” as the Oxford or Cambridge of coach education. But it has been open for 14 years, so if England’s national coach is German, does that mean it has failed in its remit to produce outstanding home-grown leaders? “No, it’s absolutely not a failure. It’s work in progress. We are only 14 years in, so arguably the coach education thing will be 20, 25 years. In a perfect world we would have an English coach, but it’s not a perfect world. There wasn’t a best candidate who was English so they appointed the best candidate that they could find in world football and they appointed Thomas. I back it 100 per cent.”

He has not been to St George’s Park since chairing a meeting of the FA’s technical advisory board last year. And so to the third mission of his life: surviving. In February, too late to be included in the book, he was diagnosed with bowel cancer.

“I had to put my big boy pants on, you know. It was quite frightening.” The cancer had spread to his stomach and he was given three courses of chemotherapy pills. The prognosis is good.

“I have been ill basically all of this year. It’s such a strange feeling and I still can’t get used to the idea that I’m sitting here telling you I’ve got bowel cancer. I just want to say, I’m one of the lucky ones. I’m going to get through it.”

His book title works better than ever.

● *Man on a Mission*, by David Sheepshanks. Pitch, £25.

Rodri brings maturity that high risk Barça were lacking

Ian Hawkey

Barcelona

LLUIS GENE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Rodri wants to "win everything possible" with Barcelona and "transmit experience" to a squad with an average age of 23

Rodri, Spain's World Cup-winning captain, completed his move from Manchester City to Barcelona yesterday and promised his appetite for success would be as sharp as it was during his seven seasons making Premier League history. While Rodri — the only footballer of the past 17 years to have won a Ballon d'Or while employed by an English club, the man whose goal sealed the 2023 Treble — paid tribute to a club "who gave me everything", he insisted: "I still have room to improve and become more complete."

The buying club, who have committed €60million (about £51million) plus add-ons to City and agreed a four-year deal with the 30-year-old, regard the signing as a statement of intent — a stride towards a third successive Liga title, to making Barcelona hardier in the later stages of the Champions League and as a blow to their rivals, Real Madrid, who had shown interest in recruiting Rodri. "Once offers came to me, I made what I thought was the best decision with family and friends," Rodri explained of his choice.

"Barça are a great club, standard-bearers and they have come a long way in the last few years. Winning two league [titles] on the trot is hard and they are not far from winning a European Cup. The midfield is fantastic."

He was warmly welcomed, with Barça fans gathering around the club's practice headquarters before his morning medical and collecting outside the city-centre restaurant where he had lunch with senior executives while the club's marketing department made a slick video around the theme of Rodri's metronomic passing.

In between the protocols, he exchanged greetings with team-mates very familiar with the midfield metronome. Rodri is now the eighth Barça player from Spain's World Cup squad. He will be sharing midfield space with the likes of Dani Olmo, Pedri and Gavi, measuring out through-balls to Lamine Yamal and shielding a defence led by Pau Cubarsí and the goalkeeper Joan García. "We have a fantastic team," Barcelona's head coach, Hansi Flick, said, beaming. "It was a motivation to be managed by Hansi," Rodri added. "He has a very brave approach to the game."

While Flick has said farewell this summer to senior players like Robert Lewandowski, Ferran Torres and the previously on-loan Marcus Rashford, the squad has been significantly boosted. Rodri's arrival follows the signings of the England winger Anthony Gordon, from Newcastle United, and the Germany forward Karim Adeyemi, from Borussia Dortmund.

If much of the rest of the line-up looks like the mirror of Spain's all-conquering national team, they also carry more than a passing resemblance to the dominant club side in English football over the past decade: City. Rodri and Eric García won a Premier League title with City together in 2021. Also checking in at Barcelona yesterday was João Cancelo, a City team-mate for three of Rodri's four Premier League-winning seasons. Cancelo has had two previous loan spells at Barcelona, the second for the six months from January to June, while he was still contracted to Al-Hilal. His engagement with the Saudi Arabian club has now expired, and Barça agreed a three-year deal through which they can call on Cancelo's protean talents at left back, right back or alongside Rodri in midfield.

Barça's bigger aim, before the end of the transfer window, is to add yet another former City player from the Pep Guardiola era, Julián Alvarez. Alvarez has told his present club, Atletico Madrid, he wants to join Barça but the fee — Atletico expect far more than the €95million they paid City for Alvarez two summers ago — remains an obstacle. "We won't accept an offer of €100million, nor €150million, nor €200million," Miguel Ángel Gil, the Atletico chief executive, said. "If the club boss says that, then it's clear," Diego Simeone, Atletico's head coach, added. "He's our best attacking player and we need to build our team around him."

Atletico may ultimately be holding out for the best possible sale price for a restless player, but they are equally concerned at a direct rival poaching their leading man. Last season no club better exploited the frailties of Barcelona's enterprising but high-risk game plan than Atletico, beating Barça 4-0 in the first leg of a Copa del Rey semi-final. In the Champions League quarter-finals, Atletico again prevailed, 3-2 on aggregate, Barcelona hampered by red cards in the home and away legs.

Rodri, who played for Villarreal and Atletico before his seven decorated years in Manchester, promises an injection of maturity and savvy into a side that can bear symptoms of naivety or, at least, of flawed game management. "I have some of the experience that a few of the players here don't have yet," Rodri said. "I'll try to transmit that."

"He is the best anchor midfielder in the world," said Barcelona's Fermín López, a younger Spain colleague who would probably have made the 26-man World Cup squad if not for injury. "He will give us a lot." Namely, a reassuring presence immediately in front of a central defence whose high line is marshalled by a teenager, Cubarsí. And an exemplary professionalism from which the 19-year-olds Lamine, Cubarsí and central midfielder Marc Bernal can take lessons in how being a superstar need not mean being flashy. "Rodri won the Ballon d'Or as the football purists' choice," the columnist Cristina Cubero wrote in El Mundo Deportivo, a Barcelona-leaning sports daily. "He is the difference between pizza *napolitana* ["Neapolitan"] and pizza with pineapple on it, between simplicity and pretentiousness." The admiration among compatriots for Rodri grew through the World Cup, not only for his leadership but also for his stirring comeback from two years of repeated injury setbacks, most seriously the cruciate ligament tear that all but wiped out his 2024-25 season. The deal that has brought him to Barcelona includes significant add-ons, some dependent on his appearing in more than 60 per cent of matches.

His immaculate World Cup confirmed Rodri had fully recovered his status: he is a candidate to add a second Ballon d'Or to his 2024 prize. On learning he had told City, where he had a year left on his contract, that he wanted to explore a return to Spain, Real, with José Mourinho reappointed as head coach, made contact. Barça were given greater encouragement.

"My choices have always been about sporting targets," Rodri said. "You look not just at the present but the potential. I've come here to win everything possible."

Referee-player chats to be broadcast

Kit Shepard

On-field conversations between players and referees will be played during the live broadcast of Premier League games for the first time this season.

The English top flight introduced Ref Cam, which involves the referee wearing a camera attached to an ear, last season. So far, broadcasters have only shown footage from the technology, with no audio released until after the game. However, the initiative will now be expanded to include audio clips.

Conversations will be accessible in the one or two games a round that use Ref Cam, though the initiative will not begin until after the first few weeks of the season. Audio will be played shortly after selected incidents rather than as a live broadcast, and Ifab rules prevent the inclusion of any incidents referred to VAR. Nonetheless, the expansion of Ref Cam is the Premier League's latest attempt to increase officiating transparency in co-operation with Pro Ref (formerly PGMOL), the body that oversees officiating in English professional football. According to the Premier League, playing audio will "give supporters further insight into how and why decisions are made". What audio is used will be determined by broadcasters, the Premier League and Pro Ref. The Premier League will continue lobbying Ifab to allow audio of VAR incidents to be broadcast during live matches. In 2023, the Ifab secretary and chief executive, Lukas Brud, told the BBC that such a change would create an "unsafe environment for referees". Other changes include publishing weekly judgments from the Key Match Incident (KMI) panel, which reviews key officiating decisions. KMI judgments had previously been kept private since 2022.

Referees' decisions will become clearer

Drive to end tragedy chants

The number of incidents of tragedy chanting fell in the Premier League last season amid a fresh drive to end the problem (Paul Joyce writes).

Before the new top-flight campaign, fans are being asked to back the work of the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) and help to ensure the downward trend continues..

Songs about the Munich air disaster, the Bradford City fire, Hillsborough and the deaths of two Leeds United fans in Istanbul in 2000 continue to be heard at grounds.

Joe Blott, an FSA National Council member, said: "As supporters, generally we police ourselves well. Without supporters on board, we will be stuck with this toxicity. Efforts against tragedy chanting have to be supporter-led."

Musiala collapses again

Jamal Musiala has confirmed he is suffering from a "neurological dysfunction" after he collapsed on the pitch for the second time within a few days (Constantin Eckner writes).

The 23-year-old Bayern Munich midfielder was brought on yesterday after 61 minutes in a friendly against Heidenheim. Six minutes later, Musiala was lying on the ground, as team-mates came to his aid. Musiala then received medical attention before he left the field on his own. He had previously collapsed in a friendly against RB Leipzig on Saturday.

The player later wrote on Instagram: "I've been diagnosed with temporary absentia … caused by a neurological dysfunction. That can lead to moments like the one against Leipzig and now against Heidenheim."

Khan to be moved to hospital from prison

Pakistan's Supreme Court has ordered that Imran Khan, the jailed former prime minister and Test cricket captain, be moved to hospital for medical checks after a petition by his lawyers over claims of poor health.

Justice Shahid Waheed said Khan, who has been held in jail in Rawalpindi since 2023 on corruption charges, will be moved in the next two days to Shifa International Hospital in the capital Islamabad. Khan, 73, and his wife and spiritual guide, Bushra Bibi, were sentenced last year to 17 years in prison.

There was no immediate information about the details of Khan's health concerns included in his lawyers' petition. He received eye treatment at a hospital this year, with his family and lawyer saying at the time that he had lost most of the vision in his right eye.

Khan was prime minister from 2018 to 2022, before he was removed after a no-confidence vote during a political crisis over tensions between his government and the country's military establishment.

He had been voted in by millions of Pakistanis who grew up watching him play cricket, where he excelled as an all-rounder, playing 88 Tests and leading the nation to a World Cup victory in 1992.

Khan's younger son, Kasim, said his health was "all that mattered". "We hope the government adheres to the court orders ... allows calls and issues our visas to Pakistan simply so we can come and see him," he said.

Salman Akram Raja, the secretary general of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, told media outside the court that yesterday's ruling was "a major step, a major decision, a great blessing".

He called on the supporters of Khan to abide by his party's agreement with the court that there "must not be any crowding or commotion".

Khan's arrest in May 2023 triggered nationwide protests, some of which turned violent and led to hundreds of arrests. Khan has since faced multiple legal cases on corruption and other charges, which he and the PTI maintain are politically motivated.

In February, 14 former Test captains, including The Times' chief cricket correspondent, Mike Atherton, appealed to the Pakistan government, urging it to provide immediate medical attention from specialists of Imran's choosing; to provide humane and dignified conditions, and fair and transparent access to legal processes.

The first Test between England and Pakistan starts at Headingley today.

Khan was sentenced to 17 years in prison

SAEED KHAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Warner, who left Waverley Local Court in Sydney yesterday without making any comments to the media, must fit an "interlock" device in his car that will prevent the vehicle from starting if it detects alcohol in his system

Warner must fit breathalyser in car

David Warner must fit a device in his car that will prevent the vehicle from starting if it detects alcohol in his system after he was convicted and fined A$1,500 (about £800) for drink-driving.

Warner, who was arrested in April, pleaded guilty in a Sydney court last month after failing a breath test on the Easter weekend, when he was driving his family home in Sydney's eastern suburbs after a social occasion. The 39-year-old's blood-alcohol reading was more than twice the legal limit.

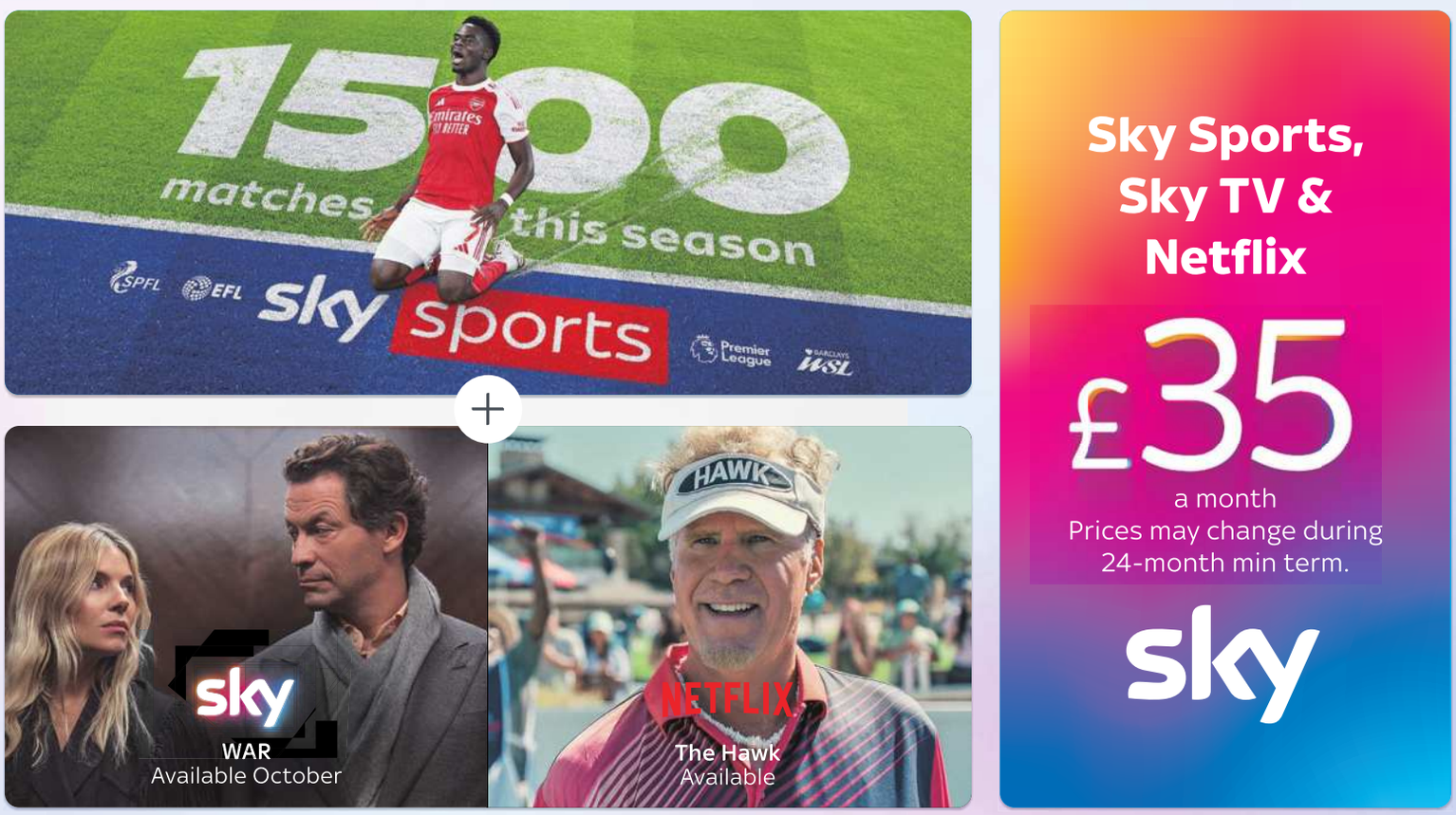
Waverley Local Court heard Warner, who has three daughters aged between seven and 11, stopped his car when he saw the roadside breath-testing site and attempted to swap seats with a female passenger.

"I accept Mr Warner is unlikely to re-offend," Judge Clare Farnan told the court in comments published by Australian media. "[But] regrettably, drink-driving is still a significant factor in many crashes in New South Wales." The offence was aggravated because children were in the car at the time, Farnan said.

Warner, who retired in 2024 having played 112 Tests and 271 limited-overs internationals for Australia, was ordered to hold an "interlock" licence for 12 months. This means he must use a breathalyser device that prevents a vehicle from being used if it detects alcohol on the driver's breath. He left the court without commenting to a large gathering of reporters.

Before Farnan's decision, Warner's lawyer told the court his client should be spared conviction because he had suffered extra punishment as a result of media coverage. "Commercial opportunities [are] being affected," Australian media quoted Awais Ahmad as saying.

Warner works for Fox Sports Australia as a commentator and was part of the local broadcaster's team covering the recent Australia-Bangladesh Test in Darwin.



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Sport Rothesay First Test: England v Pakistan

Root aiming to restore sense

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

Now, where were we? It is almost two months since England's players last donned whites for a Test match, when, amid some ridicule from the opposition, they lost a series and a captain, with the coach to follow. A fresh start, then, under new leadership against a Pakistan team for whom disruption and dislocation are frequent bedfellows and who have been hobbled with the loss of their captain, Babar Azam, through injury.

The game was billed around the return of a pair of star batsmen to jobs held previously, but Babar has not recovered from the blow to the hand first received in the Caribbean and then again in the warm-up match at Beckenham. There is limited star quality to highlight in Pakistan's team and Babar's loss, though temporary with expectations of a return for the second Test, is a blow even though he has not scored a Test hundred since late 2022.

It was a fresh day in Leeds as both teams underwent final preparations: overnight rain, temperatures cooler and leaves on the trees already yellowing, an indication that, after the intense heat and drought, summer is entering its final stretch. There is a healthy interest in the resumption of Test cricket, though, in Yorkshire; sales are very strong for the first four days, with more than 60,000 tickets shifted, though some rain is forecast. Joe Root returning to his home ground as captain once more cannot have hurt.

In the absence of Stephen Fleming, due to start as head coach before England's next assignment in South Africa (though Root said the two of them have been speaking daily), attention falls on Root this week again. As he has done since accepting the job, he sounded upbeat in his pre-match press conference, like a man who feels he has been given a free hit, and described his team as a "talented group capable of special things". Let us hope his optimism is not fleeting.

He promised once again to incorporate the best of Bazball into a more refined and nuanced approach. Some of the excesses appeared on Ben Stokes's final two days in charge when things felt completely out of control — with the benefit of hindsight two months hence, the view gets no better — and Root will be looking to restore a little calm and common sense, something, he said, his personality and character is naturally suited to do. That, without losing the edge and determination to win that Stokes brought to bear, would be welcome.

One felt for those players making their Test bows during the New Zealand series, one of the most chaotic of recent times. Emilio Gay and Jordan Cox were among that number and both will be hoping for a more settled feel around the team than during their debut series. Gay has a bit to do after a bright enough start at Lord's, having prepped for this match by making a pair at Beckenham against the touring side, and Cox must acquaint himself quickly with a position in the order, at No3, to which he is largely a stranger.

Root averages 44.9 in Tests at Headingley, his home ground

To Dan Lawrence falls the unenviable task of stepping into Stokes's shoes at six, though it helps that he is viewed primarily as a batsman who bowls, rather than a genuine all-rounder, which will keep comparisons to the minimum. Nevertheless, Root did talk up Lawrence's off spin, describing it as "underrated", a sign that, on a ground where seamers dominate and favourable results tend towards captains who bowl first, England were leaning towards leaving out Shoaib Bashir.

In a departure from the McCullum-Stokes template, Root opted not to name his team the day before the match, though everyone was said to be fit and available. One trusts this was more in line with keeping the opposition guessing rather than any indecision on his part. With Jofra Archer, Josh Tongue and Gus Atkinson having established themselves as first-choice options, one imagines that Ollie Robinson will complement them if Bashir is deemed surplus to requirements.

In a curious summer, Robinson's return has been curious in itself. He got back into the team to great acclaim and fanfare against New Zealand at Lord's, winning the man of the match award by taking seven wickets across the game, but was then sidelined with a knee injury. He has not played a first-class game since. With cloud and rain forecast, Headingley ought to play to his strengths.

It was an incongruous sight to see Root in the red of Welsh Fire playing at Headingley recently, a reminder of the logistical challenge facing England's players this week. Ben Duckett, Tongue and Atkinson were playing in the Hundred final on Sunday, and arrived in Leeds on Monday, leaving them only one day's practice before the Test. Last year a similar transition went predictably badly against South Africa, a memory that stands as a cautionary tale.

On paper, Pakistan's advantages are few, but they are coming off a Test tour to the Caribbean and a red-ball practice match against a county XI. They should be conditioned to the rhythms of first-class cricket, as England's players look to reacquaint themselves with it. That said, it is a long time since Pakistan were the kind of force that brought them successive series wins in England in the late 1980s and 1990s and this team lacks the quality of those of yesteryear.

Indeed, if New Zealand were billed as the perfect opponents for an England team looking to reset and test themselves properly, Root could not have asked for a more inviting landing in his second stint than against Pakistan at home. Pakistan finished bottom in the last cycle of the World Test Championship; they sit below England in this edition and, before their most recent win in Port of Spain, Trinidad, they had lost eight consecutive Tests on the road.

Babar's absence will be felt, especially as he found some form in the Caribbean. Salman Ali Agha takes up the reins, fresh to the job in Tests, but bringing some T20 leadership experience. He was buoyed by the news that Shan Masood has recovered from a fractured finger sustained in the series against West Indies and Masood, like the wily seamer Mohammad Abbas, brings plenty of experience of English conditions.

Bangladesh's recent win in Darwin reminds us that Test cricket can be unpredictable and it is never wise to be too bold in predictions where Pakistan are concerned, but it would be a surprise if Root's second coming did not coincide with England returning to winning ways. With only ten Tests until the Ashes, that cannot come soon enough.

Teams for today's first Test at Headingley

England (from)	Age	Tests	Runs	Bat ave	100s	Wkts	Bowl ave
Joe Root (Yorkshire, captain)	35	166	14,114	**50.58**	41	74	**48.09**
Jofra Archer (Sussex)	31	20	293	**10.10**	0	71	**28.97**
Gus Atkinson (Surrey)	28	18	513	**19.73**	1	79	**23.27**
Shoaib Bashir (Derbyshire)	22	21	106	**7.57**	0	71	**39.42**
Harry Brook (Yorkshire)	27	38	3,395	**53.04**	10	1	**123.00**
Bryson Carse (Durham)	31	14	357	**17.85**	0	58	**30.18**
Sam Cook (Essex)	29	1	0	**0**	0	1	**119.00**
†**Jordan Cox** (Essex)	25	1	52	**26.00**	0	–	**–**
Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire)	31	46	3,320	**40.00**	7	–	**–**
Matthew Fisher (Surrey)	28	2	50	**50.00**	0	6	**31.83**
Emilio Gay (Durham)	26	3	139	**23.16**	0	–	**–**
Dan Lawrence (Surrey)	29	14	671	**26.84**	0	3	**44.33**
Ollie Pope (Surrey)	28	64	3,732	**34.55**	9	–	**–**
Ollie Robinson (Sussex)	32	21	440	**14.66**	0	83	**21.91**
†**Jamie Smith** (Surrey)	26	22	1,387	**39.62**	2	–	**–**
Josh Tongue (Nottinghamshire)	28	12	68	**4.85**	0	57	**29.56**
Pakistan (from)	**Age**	**Tests**	**Runs**	**Bat ave**	**100s**	**Wkts**	**Bowl ave**
Salman Agha (captain)	35	25	1,663	**39.59**	3	20	**60.50**
†**Mohammad Rizwan**	34	42	2,473	**39.88**	3	–	**–**
†**Ghazi Ghori**	23	0	–	**–**	–	–	**–**
Awais Zafar	26	1	1	**1.00**	0	–	**–**
Azan Awais	21	1	118	**59.00**	1	–	**–**
Imam-ul-Haq	30	24	1,568	**37.33**	3	0	**–**
Shan Masood	36	46	2,653	**30.49**	6	2	**46.00**
Saud Shakeel	30	23	1,802	**43.95**	4	0	**–**
Aamer Jamel	30	8	352	**27.07**	0	21	**32.85**
Khurram Shahzad	26	6	83	**9.22**	0	20	**30.00**
Mohammad Abbas	36	29	131	**6.23**	0	110	**23.23**
Mohammad Ali	33	6	4	**0.57**	0	15	**40.40**
Sajid Khan	32	14	225	**12.50**	0	65	**28.92**
Ubaid Shah	20	0	–	**–**	–	–	**–**
Ali Usman	33	0	–	**–**	–	–	**–**

First Test: Today-Sunday (Headingley). **Second: Aug 27-31** (Lord's). **Third: Sept 9-13** (Edgbaston).

Brook not a serious player? He has better average than Lara

Steve James

"Look at Border. He's got 10,000 Test runs and he's only got three shots — the cut, the cover drive and the pull." So spoke Jack Birkenshaw once of the great Australian, Allan Border.

Birkenshaw, a sage of the game as a former England player, an umpire, coach and scout, was referencing a very distant and different era — Border finished his Test career in 1994 with 11,174 runs — but the simplicity of the left-handed Border's game plan contrasts sharply with the relentless urgency of today's Test players, who, courtesy of T20 and the clichéd need to score 360 degrees around the wicket, almost have too many shots from which to choose.

A full pantry does not always invite wise decisions, however, which brings us neatly to Harry Brook and his comments on the subject of shot selection in an interview with *BBC Sport* this week.

"It's something I've been really trying to work on, trying to assess conditions quicker, and read the surface better: to go out there knowing what shots are going to be hard and what is going to be

to team who had lost control

BRADLEY COLLYER/PA; GARETH COPLEY/GETTY IMAGES

Weather forecast

Today and tomorrow
Rain with sunny spells

Friday, Saturday and Sunday
Sunny spells

Clockwise from bottom left: Cox, catching the ball next to Brook, will bat at No 3, while Trescothick remains in charge for the series. Archer looks dangerous but Gay, top, must raise his game after making two ducks against the touring side in a warm-up match. Duckett, above left, tunes up at Headingley with the returning Lawrence

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Root: I'm a different person now

had the time to step away, play in a different environment, under a different coach and a different captain, and see the game from a different lens, and then be able to mould what I think is the best way of taking this team forward now.

"In many ways, I feel as ready as any other England captain that's ever been before. To have that amount of experience is invaluable. It's a completely different set of circumstances I'm very much looking forward to."

Pakistan suffered a blow when their captain, Babar Azam, was ruled out of the first Test with a finger injury suffered during a warm-up match at Beckenham last week. In his absence, the touring team will be led by Salman Ali Agha, a middle-order batsman who has captained in only four first-class matches. Pakistan have been boosted, though, by the return of Shan Masood, who has recovered from a finger injury.

Marcus Trescothick is overseeing team preparations as interim England head coach for the three-Test series after the sacking of Brendon McCullum, with his successor, Stephen Fleming, not arriving in the country until later in the summer. However, Root revealed he was already working with the former New Zealand captain from afar.

"He's been really good," Root said of Fleming. "I've been in constant contact with him. We speak nearly every day. It's been good to get to know him and understand how he works and how he sees things."

Root has also moved swiftly to implement changes off the field, scrapping the team curfew imposed by Rob Key, England's managing director, following the disastrous Ashes campaign.

"You want to make sure guys feel like they can be grown-up adults out there and make good decisions," Root said. "Ultimately, we've got to self-police that. We've got to look after ourselves better."

Root also insisted there wouldn't be a complete abandonment of "Bazball" but that he would be trying to instil playing with measured adaptability.

"I don't believe there is a style, one way of playing Test cricket," he said. "You've got to be adaptable, you've got to play the situation and the different tempos of the game. It's never the same throughout the five days."

easier," he said. "I practise every single shot and have done since the age of eight. In the nets, I'd do a 360 challenge with my dad. He'd throw balls and I'd have to try to hit it to a certain place: that corner, then that corner.

"I have the ability to hit it everywhere, I just have to figure it out quicker in games."

He certainly does have the ability to hit the ball everywhere, as evidenced by his stunning 55 off just 18 balls for Sunrisers Leeds against London Spirit in the Hundred recently. I watched that innings with my mouth wide open in awe and amazement for most of the time, such was his skill, power and panache.

But the problem is that there was astonishment of a very different kind at Brook's most recent Test innings, his madcap 21 off just nine balls at Trent Bridge that prompted the New Zealand players to ask repeatedly, "What are they doing?", as Bazball made a frantic and self-indulgent departure.

No matter that Brook was playing to orders, he was another easy target after a winter in which he should have been sacked as white-ball captain following his pre-match misdemeanours in New Zealand and played, in his words, some "shocking shots" in the Ashes.

And yet take a glance at the ICC's Test batting rankings and there in second place below Australia's Travis Head, and just above England's new — or rather recalled — Test captain, Joe Root, sits Brook. In his 38 Tests he averages 53, which may still be a relatively small sample size, but the list of players with lower Test averages is replete with legends of the game. Just below him is Brian Lara, and as you go down you see the likes of Ricky Ponting, Steve Waugh, Root, Border and Viv Richards.

The accusation from many quarters is that Brook is not a serious player — a man once called "a bit dumb" by Ben Stokes and widely considered the very embodiment of Bazball's worst excesses — but that is serious company. Yes, he has not made a Test century in 16 innings since his 111 against India at the Oval last summer — and even then he was blamed for England's narrow defeat — but in that time he has made two one-day international hundreds, as well as exactly 100 against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup. As I wrote recently, all-format batsmen are rare, but Brook is a precious rarity. No one has more than his 1,078 runs in all formats this year, for instance.

Perhaps now is the time for Brook and all of us to alter the narrative: for there to be more focus upon his being one of England's brightest talents rather than him not being the brightest. He loves playing against Pakistan. All his six Tests against them have come away from home, but he averages 84 in them, with four centuries, including his monumental 317 in Multan in 2024.

And he is back home in Leeds. He has only played two Tests there — in the 2023 Ashes, where he made a second-innings 75 after being miscast as a No 3 in the first innings, and the match against India last year, where he made 99.

When he made that triple-century he shared a fourth-wicket partnership of 454 with Root, who has been at the other end for so many of Brook's finer moments. For all the other changes in England's hierarchy, Brook remains the Test vice-captain and I have a feeling he will not want to let his fellow Yorkshireman Root down in any way this week. Expect that shot selection to be sharper, and a first Test century at Headingley would be no surprise.

Harry Brook record by opponent faced

	Average	Centuries
v Pakistan (6 Tests)	84.1	4
v New Zealand (8)	59.73	3
v India (5)	53.44	2
v West Indies (3)	49.25	1
v Australia (10)	40.05	0
v Sri Lanka (3)	30	0

Minimum three Tests

Source: Statsguru

Where he ranks for England

Only five players with more than 2,000 Test runs have a higher average than Brook - and the most recent of those stopped playing in 1968

	Runs	Average
H Sutcliffe (1924-35)	4,555	60.73
KF Barrington (1955-68)	6,806	58.67
WR Hammond (1927-47)	7,249	58.45
JB Hobbs (1908-30)	5,410	56.94
L Hutton (1937-55)	6,971	56.67
HC Brook (2022-)	3,395	53.04
JE Root (2012-)	14,114	50.58
DCS Compton (1937-57)	5,807	50.06
ER Dexter (1958-68)	4,502	47.89
G Boycott (1964-82)	8,114	47.72

Sport

Rodri: Why I chose Barça

Spaniard on leaving City for Catalonia – instead of Madrid

Football, page 56

The best York tips

Rob Wright's selections for first day of Ebor festival

Horse racing, page 52-53

BRADLEY COLLYER/PA

Root: I am a different person now

But England captain won't fully abandon 'Bazball'

Elizabeth Ammon

Joe Root insists he returns to the England Test captaincy as a "different person" as he prepares to lead his country into a new era.

Four years after stepping down after an exhausting initial five-year tenure in which England won only one match in his last 17 Tests as captain, the 35-year-old is back in the role. Root takes over an England side in urgent need of stabilisation, having suffered a miserable sequence of seven defeats in their past nine Tests amid accusations of a culture that had become too relaxed and was not conducive to smart cricket.

As he attempts to turn around England's fortunes, beginning on his home ground in Leeds today, Root insisted that the baggage of the past will not dictate the future.

"The landscape is very different now," he said. "I'm a very different player and person than I was when I took over as captain [in February 2017]. I'm in a very fortunate and unique position where I've got 60-odd games of experience in charge to look back on — things that I might want to change and do slightly differently — and then I

Continued on page 59

England v Pakistan

First Test, Headingley
Starts today, 11am
TV: Sky Sports Main Event and Sky Sports Cricket

Root plans to tweak his approach for the three-match series against Pakistan after his first stint as England Test captain, from 2017 to 2022, left him with regrets

FSG sold 38% Liverpool stake

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Liverpool's owner Fenway Sports Group sold a 38 per cent stake in the club to the consortium that includes the new vice-chairman Amit Bhatia and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

The size of the shareholding is greater than the club, and sources close to Bhatia's 1892 Holdings, originally indicated, which has served to raise questions as to why FSG was not more transparent.

The deal announced on Friday was understood at the time to be for a third of the club, and was said to value Liverpool at between $7 billion and $8 billion (£5.5 billion). However, the increase, which was first revealed by The Athletic, means 1892 Holdings have paid just over £2 billion for its slice of Liverpool.

In addition, there is an option for 1892

Continued on page 54

Masters: Fifa self-destructed

Kit Shepard

The Premier League chief executive Richard Masters has said Fifa "pressed the self-destruct button" when its president, Gianni Infantino, attempted to sell a £20 billion stake in the World Cup.

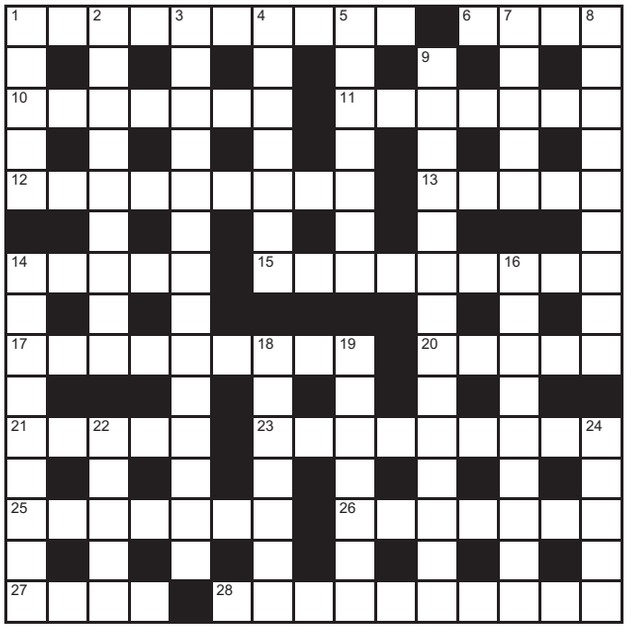
Masters branded the now-aborted Fifa Forward Enterprise plan as "a self-inflicted wound" and called for a "unity candidate" to become Fifa president.

His comments followed a Uefa vice-president saying the sacking of a senior Fifa executive, who publicly criticised Infantino's plan, "sends a deeply troubling message". The Premier League, therefore, joins a growing number of high-profile football bodies to condemn Infantino and Fifa.

"This is a problem of Fifa's making," Masters told BBC Sport. "This is a self-inflicted wound. The organisation has

Continued on page 54

Times Crossword 29,625



ACROSS

1 City ace adopts suitable position when international's dropped (10)
6 The setter's wife getting very first watch (4)
10 Roof of school building's entrance on left (7)
11 Cathartic phone conversation about love and marriage on vacation (7)
12 Shortly key Conservative opens SEND festival (9)
13 Friend's current game on live (5)
14 Small wings on primitive bird (5)
15 Will magazine for teachers tone down coverage of NASUWT? (9)
17 Stopping rock star on live being punched by Republican (9)
20 Some red raw, now fatigued (5)
21 Regularly quiz nobleman, mostly about invasive species (5)
23 Validate African country's concerning energy reserves (9)
25 Quietly leaving bread portion on the counter for rat (7)
26 More wet naked cats adopted by sister (7)
27 Revolutionary possibly does grass (4)
28 Flag extremely nasty gore, beginning to retch (5,5)

DOWN

1 Study one of Plato's letters on retired boxer (3,2)
2 Someone putting forward candidate's motion ran for Reform (9)
3 That woman's bed contains a second resigned prime minister (7,7)
4 Betrayal of subversive group reportedly revealed (4-3)
5 Stirs up old urban areas abandoned by India (7)
7 Doctors cutting two twisted feet (5)
8 Leave with first-class boor, running to catch the end of Sherlock (4,3,2)
9 Secretive Barking dockland garage (5-3-6)
14 Delirious partners holding king and joker (9)
16 Testing times in the morning at home with topless person outside (9)
18 Reason I won't fire (7)
19 Young lady bored by seeing that primarily ornamental stone (7)
22 Hang troubled padre (5)
24 Literal child who misbehaves after temperature's taken (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,624

M	A	C	A	W	■	B	A	C	K	D	A	T	E	D
E	■	A	■	A	E	■	O	■	I	■	U	■	E	■
R	U	R	A	L	D	E	A	N	■	S	T	R	A	P
C	■	A	■	R	■	F	■	F	■	T	■	K	■	A
U	N	P	L	U	G	■	H	E	A	R	H	E	A	R
T	■	A	■	S	■	W	■	R	■	I	■	Y	■	T
I	N	C	O	M	P	E	T	E	N	C	Y	■	■	■
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August 19 | **2026**

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Summer 2026 style awards

The best dressed in the heatwave

Charlize Theron, Jennifer Lopez and the Princess of Wales

Wetherspoons is banning speakerphone mode — let this be just the start

ALAMY

Carol Midgley

Say what you like about Wetherspoons, and plenty do, but I'd like to buy it a pint. It has become the first pub chain to ban antisocial "bare beating", which I know sounds like that thing people do after closing the curtains and which your mother said would give you a squint, but it's far worse than that.

It means listening to music or some brainlessly boring TikTok stunt at full blast in public without using headphones. Meaning that everyone else must suffer its blaring banality in a noise pollution dictatorship.

But — praise be — Spoons has just banned loudspeaker mode in its 792 pubs, erecting signs to tell people to put their phones on silent or use earphones. Excellent news. It follows complaints, said the company, from customers being "driven nuts by other people's videos and amplified phone conversations". Not to mention being privy to far too much information about why Julie's a slag for having had sex with Darren.

Tim Martin, the founder and chairman, said: "In a world dominated by other people's music and amplified sound, Wetherspoon pubs are an oasis of tranquillity and contemplation." Um, I don't think I'd go that far, Sir Tim, but do go on. "In order to avoid customers being driven chicken jalfrezi by a cacophony of sound," he added, "we are kindly asking phone users to pipe down." Oh dear. "Chicken jalfrezi"? Must corporate press release humour always be so painful? That's nearly as unfunny as when people say "chilli-gone-barmy".

But we digress. It's a very welcome development that other pubs should copy and I bet will be much more popular than when Wetherspoons said that parents would be limited to two alcoholic drinks each if they had their children with them as pubs aren't "babysitters". I found that a little censorious, tbh, but then again there's nothing more annoying than little feet thundering past your head when you're laid out drunk on the carpet. (Hello? Trying to have a kip here.)

But obviously the noise problem is far worse on trains and buses, where many seem to take a performative relish in being an entitled arse-pain, using their music as a sort of acoustic flatulence. No one is going to sit on

the seat next to the offender — it's like their own personal forcefield — but neither can you escape their pollution. It's like breaking wind in a crowded lift then staring defiantly at others, daring them to mention it.

It's not just young folk either. I have seen elderly people have deafening conversations on loudspeaker, totally oblivious that 22 strangers are now fully apprised of their recurring UTI.

> **Obviously the noise problem is far worse on trains and buses**

But, let's be honest, the culprits are *mostly* younger people, the ones who make sure you can't sit in the park enjoying the sun without being deafened by their atrocious taste in music. Some take this entitlement to the extreme by even watching porn on the bus, something I have always found completely baffling.

Surely the first requirement for watching a mucky video is, for obvious reasons, *privacy*. Otherwise we can only draw the alarming conclusion that they are watching the plumber come round to fix the housewife's loose flange purely for the *plot*. Which is almost more disturbing.

My smug approach to water

How gratifying that the government is considering reusing bathwater to flush toilets and whatnot. Smug face: I'm already doing that. And not with a fancy recycling system. All summer I've traipsed downstairs with a bucket, reusing bathwater for toilets and plants etc, sometimes after it has also been reused to wash the dog.

I'm not being some obeisant gimp for the greedy water companies, which have gorged on money while not building a single reservoir since 1992, then implied that we're to blame for droughts by imposing hosepipe bans. No, it's to assuage my own guilt for preferring baths to showers.

Nothing will convince me that showers make you cleaner. You're basically just hosing your surfaces like a muddy Ford Transit. Nooks and crannies need to soak. Plus, power showers can use more water than baths.

Thames Water once said women waste 50 billion litres of water a year leaving the shower running while shaving their legs. Hmm, do we think Thames Water is in a position to judge anyone? Besides, any mention of men with a shy bladder who need to turn a tap on to get things flowing, one of whom I may even know? Nothing. It's always shaved legs getting it in the neck.

No beating around the bush

Did you read about the couple who were caught having sex in some bushes in Bournemouth, the woman atop the man? When a police officer approached and asked what exactly they were doing, they replied: "We're shagging."

Well! You have to admit that shows a refreshing and quite commendable level of honesty.

None of this: "The thing is, officer, he was feeling a bit ill so I decided to straddle him to do some urgent chest compressions and then a gust of wind blew my pants off. And his."

If only all police suspects fessed up and came quietly.

The best (and

As the Conservatives propose relaxing restrictions to increase opportunities for teenagers, four Times writers recall how seasonal work changed their lives

'We'd stick our fingers in the tuna pâté. Nobody died'

Hilary Rose on waitressing, aged 16

If there were rules about employing 16-year-olds in the late 1980s, nobody at the wine bar in Alderley Edge where I worked mentioned them.

This week the Conservatives announced plans to relax the rules, which have evidently sprung up since then, to allow 16 and 17-year-olds to work until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays during term time and without restriction during school holidays. Meanwhile, Alan Milburn has mourned the decline of the Saturday job because it "helped young people build confidence, learn the habits of work and show employers what they could do". Quite so, and shortly after my 16th birthday I started work as a waitress.

We clocked on at 5pm to prep the side salads, which were iceberg lettuce with sliced red pepper, tinned sweetcorn and cress. Yum. If anyone suggested that defrosting prawns by pouring boiling water over them may not end well, I don't remember. You're 16 years old and you have orders for prawn salads but no prawns. What are you going to do? Nobody died.

Was there a health and safety briefing about the stairs we ran up and down carrying loaded trays, at the bottom of which was a glass display cabinet full of stuffed birds? Not that I remember, and besides, it wouldn't have saved the woman over whom I tipped a lasagne after tripping over nothing steeper than my own two feet.

When someone eventually fell down the equally precipitous stairs into the garden our concern for his wellbeing extended to, "You OK?" (he was). We were busy! We had prawns to defrost. We didn't hesitate to recommend the tuna pâté as a starter, because we stuck our fingers in it whenever we walked past. Nobody died. Milburn talks about showing an employer what you can do, and if that includes carving slivers off the Jamaican fudge cake undetectable to the naked eye, then that is what I did. I also proved that I could heat soup in microwaves above my head height, and only once chucked boiling liquid down my arms.

Now, granted, "nobody died" is not a ringing endorsement of the employability of teenagers. On the other hand, nobody did, and we learnt so much: how to get along with people you may never otherwise have met, in a small, hot, insanely busy kitchen. I realised there was a world beyond school, where I could be paid to have fun with friends. I learnt that if you put in a solid shift, you will earn money and sleep like a log — not a bad life lesson. Another is that when you're driving home from that shift, it is very important to turn the music down and look in your rear-view mirror from time to time, so you will see or hear the police car that is trying to pull you over for speeding and, crucially, before they decide you're a joyrider and call for reinforcements.

We worked hard, stressed about our love lives and bitched about our colleagues. Plus ça change. We lusted after the handsome barman and commiserated with the 15-year-old boy who dreamt of leaving washing up behind for the sunlit uplands of waitering. He did, eventually, and we're still friends. Later, when I was about to graduate, I upgraded to glamorous summer jobs at Harrods and Harvey Nichols in London. Neither was a patch on the wine bar. On the plus side, nobody died.

'My wage was 50p an hour. I can't say I felt exploited'

Sathnam Sanghera on factory work, aged 10+

I learnt a lot from the weekend and summer jobs I did as a teenager, student and child. The months I spent in Burger King taught me that newbies are always a target for bullying (I was asked to calculate the average number of sesame seeds on the bread buns on my first day) and that you should never annoy the staff serving you (I once saw a frozen beanburger being passed through a colleague's underwear before it was cooked and served).

The holidays I spent in a hospital laundry in Wolverhampton taught me that any amount of grimness can become ordinary (I thought I'd die the first time I opened a bag of sheets from an operating theatre, but by week 14 was more interested in what song was playing on the radio than in the blood and guts before me) and that fun colleagues can redeem almost any job, even if you're exhausted.

So, yes, I understand where the Conservatives are coming from. Apparently fewer than one in five 16 and 17-year-olds are in work, compared with nearly half at the start of the century. But would I want my non-existent children to have the experience I did? Absolutely not. The truth is that, back in the day, lots of us worked because we had to. The alternative was spending the holidays

worst) summer jobs we ever had

MICHAEL LECKIE, CHRISTOPHER L PROCTOR, CHRIS MCANDREW FOR THE TIMES

Left: Hilary Rose and Simon Mills. Below: Sathnam Sanghera and Helen Rumbelow

staring into space.

When I started my first after-school job at the age of ten it was thrilling to receive my first pay packet, but one of the biggest disappointments of my young life to find it contained no more than a £10 and a £5 note. I hadn't expected a precise wage but had let myself hope for more than 30p an hour. My tears had my mum in the boss's office on Monday morning, after which my wage was raised to 50p an hour, a sum that was — it seems ridiculous now — enough to keep me working for up to 14 hours a day at that factory on evenings, weekends and school holidays.

I can't say I felt exploited at the time: 50p was five times the pocket money I got in a week. I loved hanging out with the boss's son and daughter. I had little else to do. But given the opportunity to meet my old boss as an adult, I found myself reflecting on those thousands of hours of work, unable to remember a single time when he rounded up my wages or gave me a bonus, even though I was eventually doing the work of an adult, operating button and buttonholing machines.

It's never, as the saying goes, too late to have a happy childhood. Overall I felt loved and happy. But I could have learnt a language in the time I spent in that factory. Mastered a musical instrument. Read the whole of Dickens. Or wasted time in the park. And we should remember that, in an ideal world, the only job a child should have is that of being a child.

'I posed on deck in a pristine white crew uniform'

Simon Mills on yacht work, aged 17

All through my dismal East Yorkshire schooldays I dreamt of being in the south of France. In the sunshine. Preferably on a yacht. So as soon as school was out for summer my pal and I hitchhiked to London, took a train ferry to Paris then thumbed a series of Citroën and Renault rides to the Côte d'Azur. We ended up in Antibes, where all the big boats were moored. It was 1981. I was 17, unskilled, broke and a virgin.

We slept rough for a few days and soon started to run out of cash, so had a crack at selling lager from a chill box on the public beach. Trade was slow, probably because of my poor French. Turned out "Bières chaudes!" didn't mean what I thought it meant.

Deckhands and labourers in the port were making the most beer money, so I headed for the marina. I wandered around Port Vauban, stopping every time I clocked a British ensign flying astern and shouting out a hopeful "are you looking for a deckhand?" Within half an hour I was gifted a whole summer's work at a whacking 500 francs a day.

My job was sanding the scuppers, caulking the decks and touching up the gleaming white hull of a gin palace owned by the airline entrepreneur Freddie Laker. Skytrain, his cut-price London to New York service, was soon to be bankrupt and the owner was absent. With my boss away, I'd put on the pristine white crew uniform and do a lot of posing around on deck. Girls seemed impressed. Of course I never admitted that it wasn't actually *my* boat.

I had freedom, a deep tan, sun-bleached blond hair, my first proper girlfriend (*je ne t'oublierai jamais*, Véronique!) and, perhaps best of all, plenty of money in my *portefeuille*. I'm not sure I have been happier.

Pretty much every boy and girl I knew back then worked a summer job. We felt that work — mostly manual — somewhere hot and far away from one's teachers and parents provided a way out. The reality was more parochial: wrangling the donkey rides on the beach at Bridlington, delivering milk or baling hay on the village farm. (One friend boxed up Evel Knievel motorcycle dolls in a factory.) Or, in my case, the year before the idyllic Antibes yacht summer, labouring in a market garden greenhouse.

During that particular holiday engagement I was passed over for the tougher, more glamorous job of tomato picking and selected instead to fold and construct cardboard lettuce boxes. About 500 a day. This was grim, repetitive and thankless toil. My fingers were paper-cut by the boxes' sharp edges and bled throughout. I was paid a tenner a day. And I quit after two. Worst summer job ever.

'I'd bunk off to try eyeliners in the beauty stores'

Helen Rumbelow on being a runner, aged 18

Woozy from the sun and the hangover, I surveyed the tundra I had created out of a neighbour's garden with exhausted satisfaction. As per instructions, I had let myself in by the side gate. Not quite as per instructions, I had given the lawn a haircut more raggedy than is conventional. Sure, there was a flicker of self-doubt when facing the second request, to "weed" the beds. I knew I couldn't distinguish a weed with any certainty, other than that, like me, they were vaguely uninvited to productive society. With the full confidence of my 17 years I literally ploughed on regardless. I wouldn't deal in plant prejudice: anything I could pull out, I did.

I now understand that the tenner this lady left under the garden trowel for me to devastate her garden would have been painfully regretted. The willingness of a teenager to try any job was, in my experience, matched only by the inability to do it.

Soon I graduated from menacing the "odd job" board of our local newsagent — most of my time babysitting was spent freaking out about "ghosts" because of the funny noises in unfamiliar houses at night rather than about the children — to an office messenger for a law firm.

Sometimes the young people in this job were called "runners", which is a misleading description of the lolloping stagger I'd adopt as soon as I was safely out of eyesight of the office. Lighting up a cigarette, I'd try to focus my sleep-deprived eyes on the address on the envelope in my hand. Anywhere nearby was a disaster. The lawyers were as busy as we were dozy but even they were aware of how long someone would need to walk three blocks, hand over a document and come back.

But a trip across town? Bingo. Allowing for many imaginary transport delays, I'd fit in a bit of truant teen wandering. Document dangling from my bag, I'd apply tester eyeliners in beauty stores (no sale) and moon unrequitedly over favourite gay receptionists in the office buildings I delivered to (no deal).

Once, early on in the job, I surprised everyone by coming back efficiently. The rest of the teenage messenger team hissed at me. The higher-ups must never know how fast a "cross-town" mission was. It was our collective, union of lazy teen secret. This was never again a problem — most of the time I was lost.

fashion

The Times summer fashion

The most full-throttle fashion moment

The best shoes

The best summer suiting

The best bump

Anna Murphy hands out the prizes to those who took on the temperature with style — and a stuffed raccoon

A summer this consistently hot has made many things challenging. Thinking, for example. Walking. Doing anything other than lying down, in fact, and at times that too has felt like a scene out of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Style-wise it has seemed to me to have been a major attainment to get through a day without underarm sweat marks. So props to anyone who managed to achieve more on the fashion front. This lot pulled off a whole lot more. Introducing Summer 2026's most stylish.

The biggest hat

The latest reincarnation of that once humble up-and-comer Jenny from the Block, a Bronx native, came at Wimbledon, where she sported a hat with a perimeter that was pretty much the size of a city block. If it's good enough for Joan Collins — also photographed under a preternaturally wide brim on holiday in St Tropez — it's good enough for the next generation of diva. Though you have to have some sympathy for whomever ends up sitting next door. Tom Hiddleston, in JLo's case. Though I guess this is the kind of stuff you get taught at Eton.

The best bride

Admittedly we still don't know what two of the summer's most boldface brides wore: Taylor Swift and Zendaya. But it's going to be hard to top Dua Lipa's multi-location, multi-outfit triumph. In London she wore another one of those diva hats and a suit (shades of Bianca Jagger), while in Sicily the singer wore two feather-strewn creations, this femme fatale Bottega Veneta leather number for the welcome party and a marginally more chaste Chanel beauty for the ceremony itself.

The most colourful outfit

Our queen in waiting is proving herself a chip off the old royal block, if one is allowed to use a turn of phrase that, in this context, has a whiff of the Tower of London about it. Queen Elizabeth II was more colourful than the Teletubbies. "If I wore beige no one would know who I was," she once said. The Princess of Wales is sticking to the same playbook, her chic canary yellow Roksanda and vermilion Roland Mouret ensembles, at Ascot and Wimbledon respectively, two blindingly bright cases in point. The former was also a re-wear, having been seen a couple of times in 2022, which is also very Her late Majesty.

From left: Zendaya, Justin and Hailey Bieber, Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Anne Hathaway, the Princess of Wales, Erling Haaland and Dua Lipa. Right: Nicole Kidman

The most full-throttle fashion moment

These days there isn't a style list that doesn't have Zendaya on it and this summer we have had not one but two film promotion campaigns to enjoy her in, for *The Odyssey* and *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*. It's been an embarrassment of riches, quite frankly, not to mention of headline-garnering.

There was the Schiaparelli dress that went from catwalk to red carpet in eight hours. The 700BC Iranian gold disc earrings that — having originally been looted — caused a storm in a jewellery box. One of her most ravishing looks, by Tamara Ralph, didn't have any particular backstory, however, but certainly didn't need it. Plus its subtle crystal webbing did look ever so slightly spidery.

awards — chic in a heatwave!

COVER: GETTY IMAGES; BELOW: ERELING HAARLAND/INSTAGRAM; GETTY IMAGES; BACKGRID

The most colourful outfit

The best arm candy

The best bride

The best revenge dress

The best (and shortest) shorts

This award could equally be for best legs because, even as a straight woman, I can't restrain myself from exclaiming, "Look at the pins on Charlize Theron!" Her on-screen get-up as Calypso in *The Odyssey* was rather too fishing-net-that's-seen-better-days but she nailed the promotional dressing, looking chic yet nonchalant, as per the cami knicker-adjacent ensemble she wore in Paris.

The best bump

Theron's gambs may have played a key supporting role but her co-star, Anne Hathaway, often played second fiddle to her bump in her publicity appearances. She, and it, looked ravishing in this Prada masterpiece. But the jeans-and-a-top ensemble that revealed actual flesh, plus a belly button that was — how best to put this — standing to attention, caused a social media furore. Some went as far as to claim it was a fake stomach. Hathaway's putdown on Instagram went as follows: "Fake hair, real bump." Yes, but what about the belly button?

The best arm candy

Some people love Erling Haaland for "amassing numbers to sit beside the greatest goalscorers the world has ever seen" (our own Martin Samuel). Some love him for his bromance with Jude Bellingham. Some love him for his handbags. Sorry, manbags. The first contingent swooned over his seven goals at the World Cup. (The same as Bellingham? Did they pre-agree it?) And seven was, funnily enough, how many extremely expensive examples of arm candy the Dane was seen carrying during the tournament. His opening gambit was a £35,000 Hermès Birkin "Endless Road" model with a hand-painted landscape.

> **Zendaya's subtle crystal webbing did look ever so slightly spidery**

When the road did prove to have an end, six matches later, he was photographed arriving in Oslo with a similarly giant Dolce & Gabbana number and a taxidermied raccoon. "It followed me home," he joked about this new variety of accessory. A game-changer in every sense.

The best shoes

Are flip-flops even shoes, strictly speaking? Surely when they are rendered in leather and have kitten heels they make the grade? Either way, they were the footwear choice of the summer. Their patron saint is Hailey Bieber, who is a busy woman given that, courtesy of her mega-successful beauty brand, Rhode, and its bestselling peptide lip treatment, she is also the patron saint of very shiny lips (£20, rhodeskin.com).

The best summer suiting

The couple who dress together stay together. Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson have not only stitched together a hybrid surname (she was Taylor-Wood before they married, he was Johnson), they have cross-fertilised their wardrobes too. Their latest Wimbledon jaunt was a case in point. Game, set and matchy-matchy.

The best revenge dress

Nicole Kidman hasn't been wasting time getting over her split with Keith Urban last year. At the Chanel Cruise show in Biarritz she wore one of the label's signature little black dresses. Here was the ultimate revenge dress, not least because, as Matthieu Blazy, Chanel's creative director, pointed out, those were its precise origins.

Gabrielle Chanel "invented the little black dress to take revenge on her own social status", he said of the designer who was born in poverty and ended up living at the Ritz in Paris. "She borrowed it from servants and shopgirls and imposed it on aristocrats." And on Australian film stars. And Australian film stars' ex-husbands.

@annagmurphy

fashion

Why 'Massimo' is the front row's high street secret

Zara's sister brand Massimo Dutti has been passing for more expensive labels among the style crowd — and has joined the ranks of the 'first name only', says Harriet Walker

Shirt, £90

From top: bag, £250; ballerinas, £120; boat shoes, £130. Left: jacket, £350. Below: bag, £200. All massimodutti.com

There's an in-the-know designer being bandied between front row editors and in-demand stylists at the moment, and everyone seems to be on first-name-only terms with him. This expensive-looking £170 boxy shoulder bag? That low-key long-sleeved £40 top in just-right slubby cotton? A £100 black linen apron mididress that went on holiday with you but is now pulling its weight in your late-summer how-is-it-still-this-hot workwear wardrobe too? Massimo, darling, Massimo.

That's right — Dutti. Turns out you know his work too. This Spanish high-street brand was born in the Eighties (and its name made up by the businessman Armando Lasauca, who founded it), bought by Inditex, Zara's parent company, in the Nineties and arrived in the UK (Knightsbridge, don't you know) in the Noughties. Until recently, though, you may have had it filed under a) workwear or b) retired ceramicist.

> **Vogue editors wear it, as did Bella Hadid at Cannes this year**

Nothing wrong with either of those, but over the past year or so Massimo Dutti has had something of a zhuzh and is now one of the front row's most reliable high street habits.

Vogue editors wear it, as did Bella Hadid at this year's Cannes Film Festival. I know stylists who, when faced with the fanciest photoshoots, panic-buy a bit of Massimo to plug the gaps with plain but luxe-looking basics in case designer brands fall short. At fashion week I watched another one fib outright when a peer asked if her bright red funnelneck anorak/bomber jacket was Prada. In fact it was the sold-out version from — yes — Massimo, which has just landed in stores again and now comes in cobalt blue as well (£130, all massimodutti.com). This year, when I went to the Clapham HQ of the shopping site and influencer hub SheerLuxe to do an interview, the well-dressed women who worked there were swathed in it too.

Last week when I complimented a high-ranking PR from a brand you have all heard of on carrying an It bag I didn't quite recognise, the answer was, well, you can guess. Hers was the medium nappa leather slouch, which at £200 isn't exactly cheapo but is real and roomy for a better price than elsewhere now that most decent-sized designer bags start at about £1,800 and even those considered "mid-tier" are about £500. I had a good fondle of it, and a few more, in store recently and can vouch for the quality. (I also rate the smaller £170 black nappa crossbody.)

While at the Oxford Street branch — it was a research trip, promise — I was found by one of the sales assistants rummaging for the care label on a £350 leather blouson to check its credentials. "We only do real leather here — shoes and bags too!" she said, faintly offended. So there you go, and this one would pass for the fashion pack's favourite £1,500 Nour Hammour versions.

By the by, the Massimo shop assistants all seem to have graduated from a completely different, much more friendly training regime from their Zara comrades, so shopping here is a very different experience. There is even a "curated space" by the shoe shelves where a coffee table is laden with architecture books and Mies van der Rohe prints. My only quibble is the hideous overhead lighting in the changing rooms.

Anyway, all of which is to say, there are good buys here for those who like their clothes and accessories to look fashion crowd-anonymous as well as, and this is very much an industry vibe, lived-in rather than brand spanking new. Because you want to look as if you've just always worn whatever the latest must-have is for some time, rather than being an arriviste. Lived-in isn't the same as worn-out

Jacket, £130

The Queen, 79, and her granddaughter, 18, wore jeans. Are you ever too old?

Camilla's are straight, Eliza's are baggy. Harriet Walker on good denim for any age

Remember jeans? As temperatures finally cool, you may well be thinking about digging yours out again — and here's the evolution of man denim diagram we all needed. Queen Camilla, 79, out shopping in Ballater, near Balmoral, this week with her 18-year-old granddaughter Eliza Lopes in their respective cuts: a classic high-waisted slim straight-leg and Gen Z's preferred low-rise baggies.

Jeans divide along generational lines — for reasons of comfort and smartness as well as taste and trends — yet denim "rules" are the least prescriptive they have ever been.

The old maxim of one style being "in" and all others therefore passé doesn't hold now that jeans are acceptable anywhere from the office to the red carpet. If anything, modern wardrobes require a denim collection that encompasses more than a few styles. Here's how to do denim at any age — and every price.

Over the barrel?

What looked like a flash in the pan has become a staple: barrel-leg cuts, with their slight curve and taper, are here to stay for the fact they are flatteringly cut on the waist and bum as well as comfortably roomy.

Barrels remain the bestseller at M&S (I like its £30 mid-rise style in ecru and in washed black, marksandspencer.com), and on a jeans tour of the high street last year I was impressed by the Scandi brand & Other Stories' barrels too (£97, stories.com).

Look for soft denim without too much structure and aim for an ankle-height crop — if you're wary of being swamped by wider styles, barrels will emphasise your waist and free your feet.

How wide is too wide?

The right pair of wide-leg jeans can look elegant on anyone, provided they are not trailing pavement detritus or osmosing every puddle. If you're shorter try a wide-leg crop such as Jigsaw's Tyne style (£99, jigsaw-online.com), or go the whole hog in Mango's Danila, which has a fitted high waist to balance out the baggy hems (£39.99, shop.mango.com).

Confusingly, I find many styles billed as "straight" come up fairly wide too — especially if you're accustomed to a slimmer fit — so these may be an easier way in. I love the Lou style from A Day's March, which calls itself straight but is fairly loose (£140, adaysmarch.com), and Agolde's low-rise Loose, which are expensive but from one of best denim brands around (£330, agolde.com). Reformation's Cary "slouchy wide legs" are good on the bum (£178, thereformation.com).

What's the 'now' style?

The most au courant cut at the moment is a 1990s-inspired slim-ish straight-leg, inspired by the decade's ubiquitous Levi's. You can still buy 501s (in the original, fairly fitted cut or the recently introduced '90s cut, which is a little looser) but the brand's Easy Dad style will, in my opinion, give you a more authentic 1990s look: no stretch, higher waist, looser in the leg (£90, levis.com).

If you have more to spend, Agolde's 90s pinch-waist straights are the ne plus ultra (£300, as before) with Toteme's classic cut not far behind (£330, toteme.com). My best high street straight slims are Arket's Snow if you're tall (£85, arket.com), or Sézane's Iconique Droit (£115, sezane.com), and M&S's mid-rise straight ankle-lengths if you're not (£26, as before). Take Martha Stewart, 85, in Mother's ankle-crop Rambler style as inspiration (£286, motherdenim.com)

Where to waist?

Those who remember the Noughties whale tail thongs of old are unlikely to want to show that sliver of back (and tummy) that comes with the territory when your jeans hang off your hipbones. Let the young people find out for themselves, and opt for a mid-rise instead — Arket's Jade cropped slim is a good all-round mid-rise style (£65, arket.com).

Try adding a metal-looped belt should you want a bit of what the internet calls "intentional styling" on smarter days. The latest It belt (who knew there could be such a thing?) is Déhanche's Hollyhock style in silver (£295, net-a-porter.com) but Rise&Fall has a good-quality dupe (£85, riseandfall.co).

High-waisted styles have fallen out of fashion a little but they're great for giving you a silhouette; high waists plus tapered legs look a little dated, however. Low-rise jeans look good only on very young and very thin people, I'm sorry.

Got the skinny?

They're in, they're out, they're coming back, they still haven't. Skinny jeans took a while to catch on then a decade to kill off, but where they went wrong was that many became more than 80 per cent stretch. In fact, a good skinny jean is a hardy perennial — for wearing with tall boots, for example — only be sure that yours contain more cotton than elastic and avoid the overlong ones that rumple at the ankle. Oh, and only really in black — try Ralph Lauren's high-rise skinny in black (£155, johnlewis.com).

What other colours can I wear?

Whatever you like. True vintage blue, indigo and the darker end of stonewash are all en vogue right now, while white jeans are a year-round staple. On which note, the fashion pack are edging towards what the designer Phoebe Philo calls "chalk denim" and what you may recognise as off-white or cream instead of the brightest whites — Seventy + Mochi's Cara in ecru are good (£120, seventymochi.co.uk — sign up to our newsletter before Ilam this Thursday to get 20 per cent off the full range).

or overly distressed: Massimo's nicely softened leather boat shoes feel like something you've been slipping on every summer for years (£130), as do its plain fine-gauge knits (from £60) and white straight-leg jeans (£60; although, like Zara, all trousers come up long).

Another reason the front row set like Massimo at the moment is that its design team seem influenced by the sort of late-Nineties Prada pieces that true devotees are combing vintage resellers for: school uniform-style skinny grey cardigans, little black tunic dresses, some £100 black cigarette pants not dissimilar to a 2000s Yohji Yamamoto pair I have been kicking myself for not buying in a Tokyo second-hand shop when I had the chance (they were a bit small). From a £90 brown drawstring midiskirt to a £190 upright-collar blazer and £230 loose-fit buckleneck trenchcoat, there's more than a touch of editor favourites such as The Row and Toteme to these bits too.

The prevailing mood at Massimo is of a fashion industry personage I think of as "Milan woman" — the various European editors and stylists I spot in that city every September at the shows, making the most of the final warmth of the summer (and their tans) in midiskirts with loose tunic tops, baggy tailored trousers and cashmere tank tops, suede jackets and white denim. Theirs are likely to be by Ralph or Miuccia or Tom, but for anybody on a less astronomical budget, when better to pop in and see what the front row's other first-name-only designer has up his sleeve?

@_harrywalkerl

PETER JOLLY/NORTHPIX

The Queen and her granddaughter Eliza Lopes in Ballater. Above right: Martha Stewart for Mother denim

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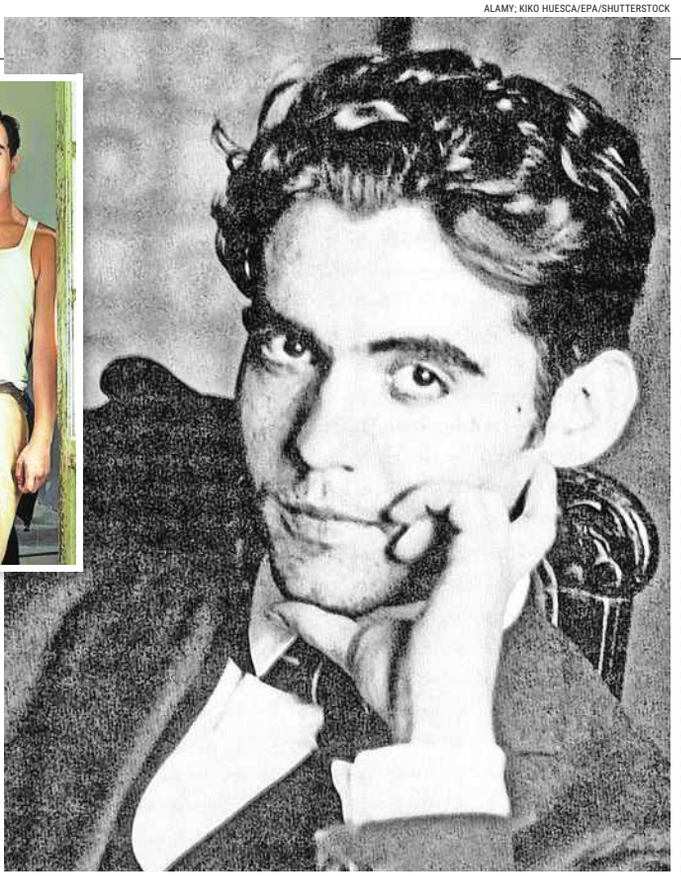
arts

ALAMY; KIKO HUESCA/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Right: Federico García Lorca. Above: La bola negra, the film inspired by an unfinished project by the poet. Below: marking the anniversary of his death in Madrid

How Lorcamania took over Spain

The poet, who died 90 years ago this week, has become a Gen Z favourite. By Isambard Wilkinson

The road between the hill villages of Víznar and Alfacar, a few miles outside Granada in southern Spain, has still not yielded its most sought-after secret.

Somewhere among its ravines and olive groves, near a pine forest and a small memorial park, Federico García Lorca is believed to have been shot and thrown into an unmarked mass grave in 1936 at the start of the civil war. Repeated excavations have found other victims but not the remains of Spain's most famous missing poet.

Spain marked the 90th anniversary of his murder yesterday with poetry, music, flowers and competing acts of remembrance. Memorial groups symbolically followed the prisoners' final route, walking from La Colonia in Víznar, where Lorca is believed to have spent his last hours, to the Federico García Lorca park in Alfacar. In Madrid artists carried a sculpture of the poet through streets and cultural sites associated with his life.

In a country whose bitter historical divisions are often characterised as "the two Spains", Lorca is as close as it comes to a national poet, but his death remains a stain on the collective conscience. His plays fill theatres, his poems are taught in schools and "Verde que te quiero verde" ("Green I want you, green") is a line almost everyone knows. Yet the state has never established where his body lies.

In the hills outside Granada remain the secrets of the circumstances of his death: who pulled the trigger, where they buried him and the combination of motives behind the murder. For some, the silence also shelters the shame of Francoist repression and of the homophobia directed at a writer whose sexuality was obscured long after his work returned to print.

As a member of the Generation of '27, along with his friends Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel, Lorca was a key figure in a cultural renaissance of a stature that Spain had not seen since the 17th century. He achieved international fame during his lifetime with works including *Gypsy Ballads* and *Blood Wedding*. When word of the 38-year-old poet's disappearance spread, HG Wells wrote from London demanding that Granada's Nationalist authorities reveal the fate of his "distinguished colleague". The rebels, later led to victory by General Francisco Franco, replied that they did not know his whereabouts.

Today Lorca's death has become almost as significant as his life. His story has turned him into an emblem and the source of a popular passion, dubbed "Lorcamania" by the Spanish press, approaching the potency of Frida Kahlo.

His image is reproduced on posters and T-shirts while tote bags are emblazoned with the phrase "You make me feel like Lorca". On TikTok young people film themselves reciting *Romance sonámbulo* ("Verde que te quiero verde") with quivering emotion down the lens. Films, books and tourist routes return to the young writer and his forbidden desire, violent death and missing grave.

This year's most conspicuous evocation is the Cannes prizewinning *La bola negra*, which premiered at the festival in May and will reach Spanish cinemas next month and the UK in November. Directed by Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi, it stars Penélope Cruz, Glenn Close and the Spanish guitarist/actor Guitarricadelafuente. It draws on an unfinished Lorca project — the first of his work to feature an openly gay protagonist — and follows three gay men in 1932, 1937 and 2017.

"It is going to turn Lorca into what he already is on a smaller scale: an icon of the whole LGBTQ movement," says Ian Gibson, the biographer who has spent six decades investigating Lorca. "It is very powerful. It is explicit about the gay Lorca who could not live his own life." The issue has acquired new force as the populist right-wing Vox Party challenges laws on historical memory and LGBT and transgender rights.

> **The mistake is viewing Lorca as nothing more than an icon**

Ignacio Peyró, a Spanish writer and commentator, however, warns that the anniversary industry risks overshadowing Lorca's work. "The mistake, particularly outside Spain, is viewing Lorca as nothing more than an icon, like Che, Mickey Mouse or Frida Kahlo," he said. "Of course he embodies values that can inspire. But this tends to present an overly simplistic view that reduces the greatness of his literature to its political significance.

"In Spain, Lorca has always been read by people on both the left and the right, simply because he is a great writer and forms part of an important tradition of poetry and theatre."

In politically polarised Spain, however, Lorca's legacy is deemed by many on the left as representing the "unhealed wounds" of the civil war. "He stands for all the dead who are still out there," Gibson says. For him, Lorca's missing body connects the celebrated artist to an estimated 115,000 victims of Francoist repression who, in spite of recent exhumations, remain in pits, wells, roadside graves and other unidentified burial places.

Gibson believes locating Lorca could begin a reconciliation left incomplete after Franco's death in 1975. But the poet's family reject separating his celebrated bones from those around him. "Lorca's grave is the field where he was shot," Laura García-Lorca, the poet's niece and president of the foundation protecting his legacy, told the Spanish press this year. "Symbolically, Lorca's remains have much greater force mixed with those of the other victims."

Gibson believes that Lorca intuited his premature death and that his work presaged his tragic end. Death was present in Lorca's work long before it overtook him, according to the biographer. "Right from the very beginning, there is the presence of death — the awareness of death waiting," he says. "I think he felt he was doomed to die young."

Yet this sense of mortality was not fatalism: it made Lorca communicate "the need to live passionately", Gibson argues, with particular sympathy for those denied the freedom to live as themselves.

His niece offers an image of a life lived to the full until it was interrupted. In Granada she showed me a handwritten list of theatrical projects planned shortly before his death. "This little list is highly symbolic because it shows his plans for the present and the future," she said.

Lorca completed *The House of Bernarda Alba* in June 1936 and had begun new works when he returned to Granada in July. He was not composing a final testament but working at extraordinary speed. Death haunted his writing but the archive pages show a man expecting to live.

His murder resulted from converging hatreds. Lorca supported the Popular Front and was to the fore of the Spanish republic's artistic life, in particular taking part in a travelling theatre company taking the arts to the poor provinces. Wealthy but allied with the republic, he was perceived as a traitor to his class. He was famous, gay and identified by the rebels as secular, and had recently denounced Granada as the place where "Spain's worst bourgeoisie" was stirring.

A Franco-era police report described him as a socialist, alleged freemason and practitioner of "homosexual and abnormal practices".

Yet it is his work that should above all be remembered, says Peyró, who describes the artist as "very avant-garde yet at the same time embodying the Spanish Golden Age". He places him alongside Antonio Machado, who "perhaps is also more profound or contemplative", and Miguel Hernández, "both of whom also had a terrible fate during the civil war".

Gibson calls Lorca "the Spanish Shakespeare", a poet, dramatist, musician, artist and performer. He describes him as telluric, a man of the fertile land outside Granada, the Vega, from which his farming father made the fortune that sustained his son's artistic career. "His metaphors grow from earth, sky and moon and he reminds us of where we come from.

"They thought they were getting rid of him," he adds. "But they will never get rid of him."

There's an epidemic of loneliness among young men. Here's why

Men aged 18 to 29 spend more than two fifths of their waking hours alone — and it's bad for them, reports

James Bloodworth

GETTY IMAGES

There are many things I like about working from home. I don't have to commute. Nobody can arrange a spontaneous meeting that drags me away from the thing I am working on. At 43 the prospect of returning to an office five days a week feels almost barbaric, but perhaps that is partly because I *am* 43. I have a partner, old friends and other people accumulated over decades of adult life.

What if you are 23 and that world has yet to be built? A new report from the Resolution Foundation suggests that this question may be more important than we have realised. Men aged 18 to 29 spend over two fifths of their waking hours alone — about six and a half hours a day. That is roughly two hours more than young men were spending alone a decade ago.

One reason is work. Solo working has increased, with working from home accounting for much of the rise in time that working-age people spend alone. The obvious response is that solitude isn't necessarily a bad thing. Plenty of people spent decades travelling miserably to jobs they could have performed just as effectively from their kitchen table.

But there may have been something else hidden in all that inconvenience. Imagine arriving in London at 22 to begin your first job. You rent a room, possibly with people you barely know. Two or three mornings a week you open your laptop and work from there.

What you don't do is sit beside somebody for hours and gradually become friends. Nobody asks whether you fancy lunch. You don't get dragged to the pub after work. You don't meet your colleague's friends, or the person you subsequently spend years dating. The tedious obligations disappear, but so do the fortuitous accidents.

Ollie, who works for a medico-legal company in London, has experienced something close to this. His contract requires only one day a week in the office. When he tried working from home for the other four, he found that "my life was basically my bedroom and the gym and maybe the office once a week, and it got very claustrophobic". So he began travelling in three or four days a week, "just so I could be around people". With staff now scattered around the country, "the means to socialise is just not there", he says.

> **If you lose that work-friend step of making mates, you're losing a massive part of your social life**

Young adulthood once contained a great deal of involuntary sociability; adult friendship was often something that happened while you were doing something else.

Felix, a 27-year-old Brit who works in the media, says he's been thinking about this while rewatching *The Office*. "If you lose that work-friend step of making mates, even if they're not your best mates — they're just people you might be at the pub with on Thursday or whatever it is — you're losing out on a massive part of your social life."

He points to the proliferation of run clubs, chess clubs and other organised ways for young people to meet as evidence that the appetite for connection has not disappeared. But joining one requires a deliberate act that school, university and work once made unnecessary. "I think it's sad that we've lost the opportunity to do that without trying hard," he says.

There is a tendency when discussing male loneliness to focus instead on emotional literacy. Men need to talk more. But the advice assumes the existence of friends to open up to in the first place. Dr Peter Meades, a psychotherapist and author of *I'm Fine (But Not Really)*, has spent more than 25 years working with men. When I asked him what loneliness looks like among his younger clients, he made an important distinction.

"It's not simply about having nobody," he told me. Some of the men he sees have busy lives, jobs, sporting groups and plenty of friends, yet remain lonely. "It's often more about a sense of not being known by others."

This is an interesting definition of loneliness because it describes something that statistics measuring time alone cannot capture. A man might play football every Wednesday and exchange hundreds of messages a week while remaining unknown in the sense Meades describes.

The modern world is extremely good at blurring this distinction. A young man can fill almost every waking hour with human voices without having a conversation of any consequence. There are podcasts, Twitch streams, YouTube videos, Discord and WhatsApp chats. Technology supplies approximations of companionship. Listen to the same podcast every week and after a while the presenters feel oddly familiar.

Online friendships themselves are more complicated. They can be genuine. But Meades believes there are limits to what they can provide.

He recently worked with a young man who spent almost his entire life gaming. The man had originally been referred for social anxiety. Gradually, however, Meades came to regard the anxiety as bound up with his extreme isolation. "The work with him was literally to get him to go to the front door and open the front door," he says.

From there came walking around the block. Eventually he was able to go to a shop. That is an extreme case. But it illustrates how isolation can feed upon itself. Social interaction becomes difficult so you withdraw; withdrawal makes social interaction more difficult. Eventually the embarrassment of having become isolated becomes another reason to avoid other people.

There is a specifically male complication too. Men often make friends side by side rather than face to face. They play football, work together, watch sport or drink in the same pub.

This can produce strong bonds. But Meades says male friendships can be close without becoming intimate. Men may have known one another since school yet possess no obvious route into saying that they are struggling.

He describes a cycle in which shame produces greater isolation and isolation, in turn, produces greater shame. The problem is therefore not solved by simply giving lonely men an instruction to become more vulnerable. Human relationships require somewhere to begin.

This is where the transformation of work matters. An office is not a mental-health intervention and should not be treated like one. But workplaces have historically been among the places where adult relationships begin without anyone setting out to manufacture them.

The same was true of pubs, clubs, churches, and all the other institutions that repeatedly put the same people in the same room. Many have declined. Others have migrated online.

In researching young men over recent years, I have encountered many who have become immersed in the online "manosphere": influencers and communities offering explanations for why relationships have become difficult and why they feel left behind. The explanations are often bleak. Women are supposedly conspiring against men; dating is rigged; masculinity itself is under attack.

But beneath the grand theories there is frequently something more ordinary. These men want girlfriends. They want friends. The internet supplies both companionship and an explanation for why they lack it.

None of this means that we should order young people back to their desks five days a week, smash their phones and reopen the working men's club. But there is something strange about treating loneliness solely as a psychological defect.

Perhaps we have become too accustomed to offering individual remedies for social problems. Download an app. Go to therapy. Be more vulnerable. All may be useful, but none of them can manufacture a social world from scratch.

Middle-aged men frequently discover loneliness through attrition: friendships disappear, marriages end, children grow up. For younger men, some are reaching adulthood without acquiring those connections in the first place.

Offices could be stifling and the compulsory after-work pint excruciating. But they gave people somewhere they were expected to turn up.

We now tell lonely young men that they need to get out there and make connections themselves. Perhaps we should also ask where, exactly, we expect them to go.

times2

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai difficult

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

6	1		3					
	8	9 5 2		4	2 3			
8	4 3 1 2	3 8	1 5	5	1 2 3 4			
2	7		9		1	6	7	
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				5	9 7	2 3	8 1	9
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	8	9	1	6		8 7	6	5
	5 4 8	3 5 1	7	2	4 7			
8	9							8
2	4 3	7 3 4	5	1 7	2			4

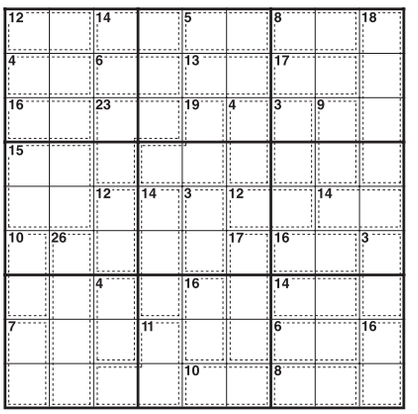
2	6	4 8						
	3	2 9	4	7 8 9 6				
	3 7 8	2 9 3	7	6 5				
4	5	6 5						
	9	4 3 7	5	6 5	9			
5	9 7	2 3	8 1	9	3 7			
	5	8 3 1		9	5 2			
3	1 6 5 7	7 3	8 1	5	4 9 2 8			
8	5		6		7			
4		8 3 5		8	4			

Sudoku easy

			2					
	2 9 3		7	6				
		5			4			
	8	2		5 1 8	6			
7	4				3			
	6	4 7 8 1			9			
	3		9	7				

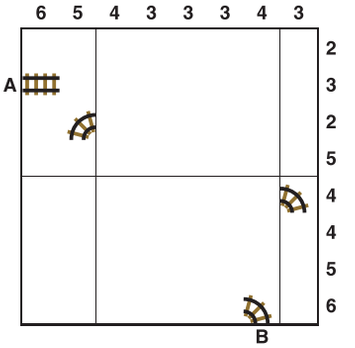
Killer gentle

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



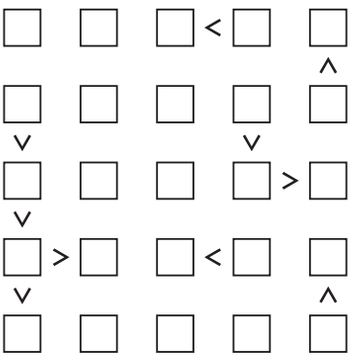
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

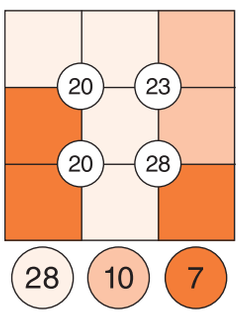


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

18	15	16	22	10	1	9	21	14	■	18	■	4
■	9	■	11	■	2	■	12	■	12	9	19	9
21	16	20	18	20	6	11	2	■	■	16	■	25
■	23	■	17	■	11	■	16	2	19	20	2	10
24	12 L	11	16	■	2	■	14	■	■	3	■	9
■	25	■	22	11	24	18	■	22	3	3	9	12
24	■	■	10	■	18	■	3	■	16	■	■	14
18	16	11	13	14	■	10	20	13	2	■	19	■
11	■	5	■	■	21	■	13	■	2	26	9	8
1	11	16	2 E	9	11	■	2	■	7	■	21	■
1	■	22	■	■	8	25	24	18	20	21	9	12
12	22	22	8	■	20	■	24	■	13	■	18	■
25	■	18	■	20	13	19 V	2	20	17	12	2	23

A B C D ~~E~~ F G H I J K ~~L~~ M N O P Q R S T U ~~V~~ W X Y Z

1	2 E	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 L	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 V	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

Solutions in tomorrow's Times2

2					1
		1	2		
	1			6	
	5			2	
		3	5		
6					2

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

8	7	1	6	9	4	5	3	2					8	5	1	6	9	2	7	3	4			
3	6	5	2	1	8	7	9	4					6	2	9	4	7	3	8	5	1			
9	2	4	7	3	5	1	6	8					3	7	4	1	8	5	6	9	2			
1	5	8	4	7	3	6	2	9					5	9	2	3	6	4	1	7	8			
6	3	9	5	2	1	4	8	7					1	4	6	8	5	7	9	2	3			
2	4	7	9	8	6	3	5	1					7	3	8	9	2	1	5	4	6			
7	8	6	3	4	9	2	1	5	7	6	9		4	8	3	5	1	9	2	6	7			
5	9	2	1	6	7	3	5	4	2	5	1		2	1	5	7	3	6	4	8	9			
4	1	3	8	5	2	9	7	6	4	3	8		2	1	5	7	3	6	4	8	9			
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6	7	3	5	2	8	4	9	1	8	2	7		3	5	6	2	1	7	8	9	4			
5	8	2	1	4	9	6	3	7	9	1	5		8	4	2	5	9	3	6	7	1			
8	1	4	6	9	2	7	5	3					4	7	8	1	5	2	9	3	6			
2	3	5	4	8	7	1	6	9					6	1	9	7	3	8	4	5	2			
7	9	6	3	1	5	2	8	4					5	2	3	4	6	9	7	1	8			
3	5	8	2	7	4	9	1	6					2	6	5	9	4	1	3	8	7			
1	2	7	9	3	6	8	4	5					9	8	7	3	2	6	1	4	5			
4	6	9	8	5	1	3	7	2					1	3	4	8	7	5	2	6	9			

SUDOKU

8	3	7	2	5	6	4	1	9
1	6	9	4	7	8	3	5	2
2	4	5	3	9	1	7	8	6
9	5	2	1	8	3	6	7	4
4	1	3	7	6	5	9	2	8
7	8	6	9	2	4	1	3	5
3	9	1	8	4	2	5	6	7
6	2	4	5	3	7	8	9	1
5	7	8	6	1	9	2	4	3

KILLER

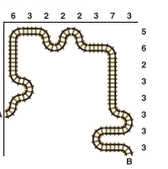
9	5	8	7	3	6	1	4	2
2	3	4	1	9	5	7	6	8
1	7	6	2	8	4	5	9	3
3	4	7	8	1	9	6	2	5
5	8	1	6	2	3	9	7	4
6	9	2	4	5	7	8	3	1
8	6	3	9	4	1	2	5	7
7	2	5	3	6	8	4	1	9
4	1	9	5	7	2	3	8	6

SAKURO

MINI SUDOKU

6	2	1	5	4	3
4	5	3	6	1	2
1	4	6	2	3	5
2	3	5	1	6	4
3	1	2	4	5	6
5	6	4	3	2	1

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI

5	2	4	3	1
1 <	4	5	2	3
3 <	5	2 >	1	4
4	1	3 <	5	2
2 <	3	1	4 <	5

CODEWORD

■	B	I	L	L	O	W	Y	■	T	S	A	R
Q	G	■	■	A	■	R	■	U	■	U
U	N	L	U	C	K	Y	■	E	E	R	I	E
I	■	O	■	O	■	L	■	L	G	■	D
B	L	O	W	N	■	A	M	A	Z	E	D
B	■	■	■	C	■	Y	X	■	O	■	T
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Was this ADHD polemic alarmist or alarming?

James Jackson TV review

The Great ADHD Myth?
Channel 4
★★★★☆

Rarely has a question mark looked so carefully added. It has made no difference. The title *The Great ADHD Myth?* provoked a backlash a week before the programme was broadcast. Or, as the chief executive of ADHD UK put it in a letter to Channel 4, "The damage of a title like this is done... before a single frame is broadcast."

Most of the 2.5 million people in the UK who have had ADHD diagnosed will no doubt agree — in fact many will be enraged by a film that has dared to poke an almighty hornet's nest. Why? Dr Max Pemberton essentially argued and found experts to corroborate that ADHD has become a kind of mass delusion — an overmedicalised, profitable industry.

Take just some of the damning statements. "I think it will be looked at in a similar way to using drugs to make people not homosexual any more in the early 20th century," one educational psychologist said in the context of kids being given ADHD medication. "In 100 years' time people are going to wonder, 'How could we be so gullible?'" another said.

As for Pemberton, a psychiatrist of nearly 25 years, he said: "I'm now convinced it's a myth that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder. Actually I think it's a set of difficult behaviours, a social construct." If this had been made as a dispassionate science film it would have been flawed by a lack of balance: there was no real counter-argument offered to the idea of ADHD as a "myth". Except this wasn't *Horizon*. This was, really, a polemic.

So the question is: was it a valuable one? Yes, because the issues raised do need to be discussed. At one point Pemberton proved how easy it is to be diagnosed when a single online assessment, for which he paid £1,200, told him he has ADHD (he doesn't).

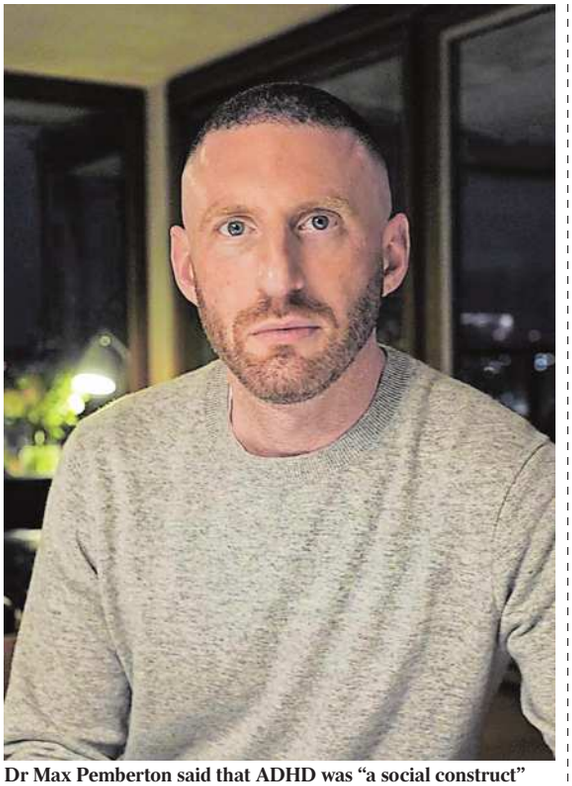
Maybe that's a helpful thing for adults, but what about the statistic "ADHD diagnosis has more than doubled in children aged 10-17 in eight years and the use of medication has increased by almost 90 per cent"?

Alan Partridge stumbled onto this ground in his recent BBCI series when he rambled about a "time was when ADHD would have been [called] 'ants in the pants'", but there's nothing funny about the reality here, as the case of ten-year-old Mason highlighted. The film tracked this good-natured, hyperactive boy as he came off pills, ones he said "take my fun-ness away". Ditching them — and, notably, screens — was no problem, quite the opposite, as he got back to playing in nature, "doing boys' stuff". Yet, and no doubt to Pemberton's dismay, Mason's mother ultimately felt forced to put him back on meds after his schoolwork once again fell way behind.

What's the solution? Pemberton said, "To me it feels wrong that we're diagnosing kids for being kids," and that it's not our children's brains that need to be fixed but the system: schools need to be more adapted to address learning needs. I can't imagine parents of children who have had ADHD diagnosed will have found that hugely helpful to their situation.

Meanwhile, the former president of the Royal College of GPs talked of there potentially being "an untapped reservoir of talent that we are currently drugging out of existence". Alarmist or alarming? Everyone watching will have had their view. To me, much of this film felt convincing.

MINNOW PRODUCTIONS



Dr Max Pemberton said that ADHD was "a social construct"

Radio choice

BBC Proms
Radio 3, 7pm

With Christopher Nolan's *Odyssey* making this the summer of Greek myth, it's apt that tonight's Prom is Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *above*, performed in its entirety at the event for the first time in almost 50 years. Tonight's show is a well-reviewed performance from the Glyndebourne Festival, starring Rachel Willis-Sorensen as Ariadne. The piece is formed of an opera within an opera that begins with events before a performance of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. An opera company and a burlesque troupe led by the comedian Zerbintta (Mikhail Timoshenko) compete to see who puts their show on — the opera folk obviously win. ***Clair Woodward***

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Rosie Wright and Stig Abell with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** The Times at One with Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Darryl Morris with The Evening Edition. Evening conversation **10.00** Olly Mann **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Prom Nights on Radio 2. A concert to mark the 40th anniversary of Paul Simon's acclaimed album *Graceland* from the Royal Albert Hall, London **9.00** The Folk Show with Mark Radcliffe **10.00** The Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O'Leary (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Linton Stephens presents classical musical highlights from the Proms and the Edinburgh Festival. GF Handel (Concerto Grosso in G, Op 6 No 1); Barber (Symphony No 1); Mussorgsky, arr. Elgar Howarth (*Pictures at an Exhibition*); Palestrina (*Missa Papae Marcelli* — Credo) and Geminiani (Concerto Grosso in D minor — *La Folia* — after Corelli's Violin Sonata in D minor, Op 5 No 12)
3.00 Choral Evensong
Live from St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, as part of the Edinburgh Festivals, with music by Bairstow, Jackson and Stanford
4.00 Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Kate Molleson follows Felix Mendelssohn through Scottish Highlands and Welsh rainstorms
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Choice Live BBC Proms
Andrew McGregor presents Glyndebourne Festival Opera conducted by Robin Ticciati in a semi-staged performance of Strauss's opera within an opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, live from the Royal Albert Hall, London. During the interval, the classicist and author Emily Hauser joins Andrew to explore the mythology behind Ariadne, re-examine the agency of women in the literature of antiquity, and consider how stories that have long been told through the actions of men might be recovered through the women who shaped their fates
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
Gretchen Parlato highlights a pioneering American musician
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 BBC Inside Science (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Sideways (6/8)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle (4/6)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Saving Young Men from Murder: The Homeboy Story (r)
11.40 This Week in History
11.45 Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People
Written by Helena Attlee. The author celebrates the feast day of one of Etna's local saints. Read by Juliet Aubrey and abridged by Libby Spurrier (3/5)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence (3/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: United Kingdoms
Series of five short plays on the theme of Reflecting (5/5) (r)
3.00 The Grand North Atlantic Home Video Archive (r)
3.30 All Under One Magnetosphere (r)
4.00 The Power of Guilt (5/5) (r)
4.15 The Media Show
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Best Medicine (4/6)
7.00 The Archers
The Maliks have a bone to pick
7.15 Front Row
8.00 The Moral Maze
Debate on ethical issues (1/6)
9.00 Invisible Hands
The academic who led America to disaster in Vietnam (4/7) (r)
9.30 Michael Sheen Gets into Character
The methods used by actors to get into character (1/3) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office (3/10)
11.00 Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness (1/6) (r)
11.15 Follow the Rabbit (4/5) (r)
11.30 Poetry Please (3/4) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am You Heard It Here First **8.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **8.45** Agnes Grey **9.00** Best Medicine **9.30** The Essay: British Film Comedians **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** #TheQueue **11.00** The Wolf Far Hence **11.30** The Senior Partner **12.00** After Henry **12.30pm** The Missing Hancocks **1.00** You Heard It Here First **1.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **1.45** Agnes Grey **2.00** The Ultimate Choice **2.30** Getting Nowhere Fast **3.00** A Pair of Blue Eyes **4.00** #TheQueue **5.00** The Wolf Far Hence **5.30** The Senior Partner **6.00** After Henry **6.30** The Missing Hancocks **7.00** You Heard It Here First **7.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **7.45** Agnes Grey **8.00** The Ultimate Choice **8.30** Getting Nowhere Fast **9.00** A Pair of Blue Eyes **10.00** Comedy Club: Best Medicine **10.30** Mitch Benn's Crimes Against Music **11.00** Welcome to Wherever You Are **11.30** Dial M for Pizza

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Rima Ahmed **11.00** Holly Hamilton **2.00pm** Marianna Spring **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **7.30** 5 Live Sport. A look ahead to Coventry City's return to the Premier League **9.00** 5 Live Sport **10.30** Qasa Alom **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Max Rushden & Charlie Baker **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Kick Off **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Jeremy Kyle **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence: Shygirl **12.00** Freak Zone Playlist **1.00am** Blood & Fire: Roots, Reggae and Rastafari **2.00** The First Time with Jimmy Cliff **3.00** Live Hour **4.00** 6 Music's Jukebox

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with Moneybox **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Will MacDonald **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Tim Lihoreau **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with John Brunning **9.00** Classic FM's Composer Carousel with John Brunning **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Professor T
ITV1, 9pm

Ben Miller's OCD crime consultant Jasper Tempest has deadpanned his way to another series. Life feels somewhat bleak as we return to the cobbled streets of Cambridge, the team mourning DI Lisa Donckers (Emma Naomi), who was brutally run down at the end of last season. Jasper is spiralling, and Dan (Barney White) is down in the dumps to say the least. Luckily Lisa's ditzy replacement, Chloe (Rhian Blundell), should lighten the mood — and for all of her verbal diarrhoea she actually fosters some rather impressive instincts. She'll need to learn fast — her first day takes her to a mysterious death on a boat, and Dan has no patience for showing her the ropes. Watch out for Zoë Wanamaker joining the cast as Jasper's oddball aunt Zelda and Juliet Stevenson as the therapist Dr Helena Goldberg. **Emma Bullimore**

Zoë Wanamaker, Ben Miller and Juliet Stevenson in Professor T

Fake or Fortune? What Happened Next
BBC1, 8pm

For most of us the shed is home to a lawnmower and dried-out paint pots. It's a different story for Alain Brun, who discovered small sketchbooks thought to belong to the French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. If genuine, the early watercolours and drawings would fetch a six-figure sum, but Brun needed proof. He had a disappointing experience last time he saw Fiona Bruce and the team, including the co-presenter Philip Mould, as the committee refused to authenticate the work — they believed it was more likely the sketches were by the artist's tutor. But Brun was certain he was sitting on something rather more special. Eight years later he's refusing to give up, and after gathering new evidence he's preparing to convince the committee again. As always, this show serves up more suspense than an episode of Poirot. **EB**

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. Sarah Moore is on the lookout for items she can save and sell on at Witley recycling centre in Surrey
2.45 Escape to the Country. Help for an artistic couple who want to start their own music festival in the Scottish Highlands (r)
3.30 The Repair Shop. The experts restore a carved wooden village sign, an organ crafted from cardboard, a shop till from the 1960s and cinema seats from the 1940s (r) (AD)
4.30 The Answer Run. Quiz show
5.15 Pointless. Quiz series hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Nish Kumar (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Weekday magazine presented by Clara Amfo and JB Gill

7.30 EastEnders It is the day of Cindy and Kim's hen dos, Ross steps up for Joel, and Kat supports Kim when her day does not go to plan (AD)

8.00 Fake or Fortune? What Happened Next An update on a 2018 edition of the series exploring whether two sketchbooks that were found in a garden shed in France were really the work of a young Toulouse-Lautrec. *See picks of the day* (5/6) (AD)

9.00 Celebrity MasterChef Joe Pasquale, Jason Mohammad, Emily Campbell, Shakira Khan and Jay McGuiness serve up a dish using a mystery ingredient and cook a pie for guest Paddy McGuinness. Judges Grace Dent and Giorgio Locatelli are on hand to appraise their efforts (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 MOTD: Uefa Champions League Action from the play-off round first-leg ties, with matches including Celtic v LASK held at Celtic Park

11.25 FILM: Monkey Man (18, 2024) A man unleashes his own brand of vengeance against the men who killed his mother, and continue to exploit the powerless. Action thriller with Dev Patel and Sharlto Copley

1.25am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.15am Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Great Japanese Railway Journeys. Exploring Hokkaido (r) (AD, SL)
8.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys. Exploring Corsica's landscapes (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. Nina Conti, Nick Helm, Athena Kugblenu and Toby Tarrant take part in the quiz (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer (r) (AD)
3.30 Serengeti II. The young animals learn to hunt in the aftermath of the flood (r) (AD)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. Items are valued at Lake Bala, north Wales (r)
5.15 Flog It! An edition from Derbyshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. With former winners Edith Bowman, Rhys James, Anita Rani and Simon Rimmer (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning. Bear revisits people he tried to help (r) (AD)

7.00 Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Action from the opening day of the first Test in the three-match series, held at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds

8.00 Digging for Britain Alice Roberts explores archaeological treasures in the west of Britain, including the remains of Snodhill Castle in Herefordshire and what is believed to be the oldest house ever found in the city of Cardiff (6/6) (r) (AD)

9.00 Murder Trial: Death of a Dog Walker (2/2) With Brian Low's family seeking justice and answers, David Campbell takes the stand to defend himself against a murder charge built on circumstantial evidence (AD)

10.00 Couples Therapy New series. Helping a couple with political differences. *See picks of the day* (1/9)
10.30 Newsnight With Katie Razzall

11.05 Couples Therapy A man opens up about his cheating on his partner. *See picks of the day* (2/9)
11.35 Couples Therapy A man who turned to ChatGPT for support after his partner dismissed his weight loss. *See picks of the day* (3/9)

12.05am Buried with Michael Sheen The actor investigates allegations of toxic contamination in Wales (r) (AD) **1.05** Sign Zone: Amityville: An Origin. The haunted house is reinvented by the success of film *The Amityville Horror*. Last in the series (r) (AD, SL) **1.55-2.55** Evolution (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.00pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 Live ITV Racing. Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present coverage of the opening day of the Ebor Meeting at York, including feature race the Juddmonte International Stakes. Analysis comes from Jason Weaver, Adele Mulrennan and Ruby Walsh, with reporting by Matt Chapman, Oli Bell and Mick Fitzgerald, and race commentary provided by Richard Hoiles
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals. Compilation of some of the most dramatic endgames from the arcade-themed quiz show hosted by Ben Shephard (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as Contestants Londonderry, Newcastle, Bolton pit their wits against one of the Chasers in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel The team celebrates the 160th anniversary of the Langham. Last in the series (AD)

8.00 Emmerdale Kev makes a confession that leaves Billy stunned (AD)

8.30 Coronation Street Idris coaches Ollie ahead of the poker night at Speed Daal, and Todd is accosted by a woman named Celeste (AD)

9.00 Professor T New series of the drama starring Ben Miller. Jasper is no longer consulting for the police following Lisa's death but he is lured back in when a young woman disappears from a luxury yacht. *See picks of the day* (1/6) (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

10.45 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace — What Happened Next A foundling reveals further discoveries after meeting her half-brother in 2024, while a man discusses a development after his appearance on the show (r) (AD)

11.40 British Touring Car Championship Highlights The sixth weekend of the 2026 British Touring Car Championship at Knockhill circuit

1.05am Shop on TV 3.00 Love & Death. Candy gets a visit from an incensed Pastor Jackie (r) (AD) **3.50** Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel. A supervisor Rodrigo welcomes a dancing idol of his (r) (AD, SL) **4.15** Unwind with ITV **5.30-6.00** Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. A restaurant in Yonkers, New York (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. A mother and son restore a windmill in Lincolnshire (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A bid to fix a tired auction property in West Yorkshire (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Debbie McGee assisting Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun. Sara Damergi helps a couple find their dream holiday home in Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge. A curdled curry leave a bad taste with the judges (r)
5.00 Château DIY. The owners of Chateau de Seguenville rush to get everything ready and in place for an open day (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz find a massive Ohio collection that has mega-pick potential (r) (AD)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Extraordinary Extensions A Croydon couple build an extension inspired by their passions for cars and crafts. Plus, a revisit to a Manchester property to see whether a glass extension has been a success (AD)

9.00 Love You to Death New series. The story of Lisa Hayden-Johnson's shocking deception, during which she fabricated her son Matthew's illness and subjected him to unnecessary medical procedures. Continues tomorrow (1/3) (AD)

10.00 Outback Murder Highway New series. Documentary investigating killings along a 500-mile Australian road, starting with two student nurses who went missing while hitch-hiking in 1972 (1/4) (AD)

11.05 Outback Murder Highway An investigation into the murder of three New Zealand motorcyclists who were shot dead near a remote caravan park at Mount Isa (2/4) (AD)

12.05am Murder Case: The Digital Detectives A 2020 murder investigation (r) (AD, SL) **1.00** Celebrity Hunted (r) (AD, SL) **2.50** Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (AD) **3.40** Yorkshire by the Sea (r) (AD) **4.35** Kirstie's House of Craft (r) **4.55** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: The Body in the Attic (PG, TVM, 2023) A wife convinces her lover to move into her attic. After finding his dead body, she fears her husband knows more than he is letting on, keeping his knowledge of her affair a secret. Thriller starring Abigail Hawk
4.00 Castle. The writer becomes obsessed with a murder because it reminds him of an event in his childhood, while Beckett reaches a turning point in her life. Last in the series (r)
4.55 Love Nature. The reintroduction of pine martens into Dartmoor and Exmoor (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Capri: Jewel of the Med. Cameras focus on one of the Mediterranean's smallest inhabited islands, which attracts almost two million visitors per year (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Car Pound Cops Tracking cars as they are seized for a variety of offences, with exclusive access to car pounds, police forces, local council enforcement agencies and national organisations (8/8) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts As the team at Barnsley Casualty deal with winter pressures, a doctor looks after a woman who has been bleeding heavily from her nose for over three hours, losing a pint of blood just in the ambulance

9.00 999: Critical Condition A man worries that he may never walk again after a road traffic accident and a mother fights for her life during a severe asthma attack (6/6)

10.00 A&E: Crash Scene Emergency The work of medical teams at University Hospital Coventry's trauma unit. Emergency services and helicopter medics perform CPR on a 76-year-old man in cardiac arrest (r)

11.05 Ambulance: Code Red Critical Care Paramedics are dispatched to help 64-year-old, who has collapsed at work with a suspected cardiac arrest, and a 52-year-old is trapped in her car after crashing into a tree (r) (AD)

12.05am A&E After Dark Documentary (r) (AD) **1.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **2.50** Castle (r) **3.40** Friends (r) **4.30** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Paw Patrol (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** The Adventures of Paddington (r) (SL)

television

Rome: A History of the Eternal City — City of the Sacred
BBC4, 8.15pm

In 2012 the historian Simon Sebag Montefiore presented a three-part series uncovering the role of religion in creating and maintaining the power of Rome. The city is the beating heart of the Catholic church, but as Montefiore points out, its holy status owes everything to its pre-Christian past. The first episode starts with the founding myth of Romulus and Remus. At 8pm the presenter recalls the making of this series in *Simon Sebag Montefiore Remembers... Rome*. **Joe Clay**

Couples Therapy
BBC2, 10pm

If you want evidence of a divided America, look no further than the couples featured in the fifth run of the series following therapy sessions conducted by the psychoanalyst Dr Orna Guralnik. A couple, Guralnik says, is a "mini political system". Marjorie and Jason have been married for 11 years, but their union is fraying. **JC**

STREAMING CHOICE

A Beautiful Obsession
Prime Video

Directed by the always reliable Kevin Macdonald (*Touching the Void*, *The Last King of Scotland*), this four-part docuseries follows Pep Guardiola's final two seasons as manager of Manchester City. Yes, we could have done with fewer celebrity opinions and more analysis of the club's owner (Sheikh Mansour), but at the basic level of fan-service this is a thrilling tale of collapse and resurrection. **Andrew Male**

FILM CHOICE

Genevieve (U, 1953)
Talking Pictures TV, 7.35pm

This 1953 British comic caper is part Ealing comedy, part wacky races. Having chugged their way through the annual London to Brighton veteran car run, the friends Alan McKim (John Gregson) and Ambrose Claverhouse (Kenneth More) strike a wager to race back to London and be the first over Westminster Bridge. Cue sabotage, scrapes and many cries of: "Bad luck, old chap!" Dinah Sheridan and Kay Kendall play McKim's long-suffering wife and louche Claverhouse's latest squeeze respectively. (86min) **Chris Bennion**

BBC4

7.00pm Villages by the Sea (3/10) **7.30** Canal Boat Diaries (1/4) **8.00** Simon Sebag Montefiore Remembers — Rome: A History of the Eternal City. A look back at the series. *See picks of the day* **8.15** Rome: A History of the Eternal City. The role of religion in creating and maintaining the power of the city. *See picks of the day* (1/3) (AD) **9.15** Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit. The scholar examines identity and citizenship within the Roman Empire (3/4) (AD) **10.15** I, Claudius (7/12) **11.05** I, Claudius (8/12) **12.00** The Australian Wars (AD) **12.55am** Canal Boat Diaries (SL) **1.25** Rome: A History of the Eternal City. Religion in the city (AD, SL) **2.25** Villages by the Sea (SL) **2.55am-3.55** Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit (AD, SL)

Sky Arts

6.00am Classic FM Live — Great British Classics **8.00** Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Gina Lollobrigida (AD) **12.00** The Art of Film with Ian Nathan (AD) **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour **3.00** The Nineties **4.00** Discovering: Jack Nicholson **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2023. Sitters include Rob Delaney (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Voices of the Valleys **9.00** Battle of the Irish Dancers **10.00** The Eighties (AD) **11.00** The Art of Architecture **12.00** Inside Guggenheim (AD) **1.15am** Ai Weiwei: The Artivist **2.30am-4.00** Lily and Lolly: The Forgotten Yeats Sisters (AD)

More4

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud follows the progress of a super-modern underground home on a hill outside Canterbury (3/11) (AD) **9.00** The Roman Empire by Train with Alice Roberts. The presenter explores Rome, from the ingenuity of ancient Roman aqueducts to the story behind Trajan's Column (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 22-month-old girl is rushed to A&E after being kicked in the head by a horse (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A 91-year-old is airlifted to hospital after a car crash which required him to be cut free from his wrecked car (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** A Place in the Sun

Live sport today

Celtic striker Kasper Hogh

Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket, 10am-7pm
The opening day of the first Test in the three-match series held at Headingley in Leeds

Live Women's Cycling
TNT Sports 1, 10.45am-3.45pm
Stage one of the Tour of Britain, a 158.9km route that starts and ends in Cockermouth

Live Tennis
Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Tennis, 3.30pm-4am
Day seven of the Cincinnati Open, a joint ATP 1000 and WTA 1000 event at Lindner Family Tennis Center in Ohio

Live Uefa Champions League: Celtic v LASK
TNT Sports 1, 7.30pm-10.30 (Kick-off **8.00**) At Celtic Park

Live CPL: Saint Lucia Kings v Guyana Amazon Warriors
TNT Sports 1, 11.30pm-3.45am
The T20 game at Daren Sammy Cricket Ground, Saint Lucia

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Melody Club (U, 1949) (b/w) **7.20** What's on TPTV **7.35 FILM: The Smart Aleck (PG, 1951)** (b/w) **8.45 FILM: Lunch Hour (U, 1961)** (b/w) **10.00 FILM: Sherlock Holmes and the Woman in Green (PG, 1945)** (b/w) **11.20 FILM: The Interrupted Journey (PG, 1949)** (b/w) **1.00pm** The Buccaneers (b/w) **1.35 FILM: Ring of Spies (PG, 1964)** (b/w) **3.20** Look at Life **3.35** I Couldn't Have Believed It! **3.45** Dial 999 (b/w) **4.20 FILM: The End of the Affair (PG, 1955)** **6.30** Give Us a Clue **7.00** Out of Town **7.35 FILM: Genevieve (U, 1953)** Comedy starring Dinah Sheridan and John Gregson. *See film choice* **9.20 FILM: The Story of Esther Costello (PG, 1957)** Drama (b/w) **11.25-1.35am FILM: Open Fire (12, TVM, 1994)** Fact-based drama

Film4

11.00am Dora and the Lost City of Gold (PG, 2019) (AD) **1.05pm Journey to the Center of the Earth (U, 1959)** Sci-fi adventure starring Pat Boone (AD) **3.45** American Gangster Special **3.55 Von Ryan's Express (PG, 1965)** Second World War adventure with Frank Sinatra **6.15** American Gangster Special **6.25 Moonfall (12, 2022)** A mysterious force knocks the Moon from its orbit and two astronauts join forces to avert catastrophe. Sci-fi thriller, starring Patrick Wilson and Halle Berry (AD) **9.00 Fury (15, 2014)** An American tank crew undertakes a final mission behind enemy lines in the last months of the Second World War. Drama starring Brad Pitt (AD) **11.40pm-2.50am The Beast (15, 2023)** Sci-fi drama starring Léa Seydoux and George MacKay

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60. A behind-the-scenes special of the series **7.30** Deadly 60. Steve Backshall reveals how he tracks animals **8.00 FILM: Mission: Impossible (PG, 1996)** A secret agent is accused of betraying his fellow spies, and sets out on a mission to clear his name Action thriller starring Tom Cruise (AD) **9.45** Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont Spelling Bee. The panel must perform convincing impressions **10.30** Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont Spelling Bee. There is culinary chaos as the panel spell what co-host Aaron Chen Aaron is cooking **11.20 FILM: Yesterday (12, 2019)** Comedy starring Himesh Patel (AD) **1.05am** Ladhood. Comedy series **2.45am-3.45** Vigil (r) (AD, SL)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL) **6.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Potomac **8.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.10** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Supermarket Sweep **2.10** The Floor (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor. The contestants fight for more squares (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club. Quiz game show hosted by Lee Mack (AD) **9.00** Family Guy. Five episodes (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30** G'wed (AD, SL) **1.55am-2.20** Transaction (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Rural drama (AD) **8.00** Midsomer Murders. When a farmer is mauled to death by a wild boar, the investigation leads Barnaby to a tyrannical chef (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Cathy and Mrs Chapman's new business venture hits a serious obstacle (7/8) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. Alphy and Geordie investigate a death related to a Fascist lecturer (8/8) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution (7/10) **12.55am** Trial & Retribution **1.55am-2.20** George and Mildred

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI (AD) **8.05** Robin of Sherwood **9.10** Boon **10.15** The Professionals (AD) **11.25** Robin of Sherwood **12.30pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.35** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Professionals (AD) **5.55** Minder. Arthur helps an ex-con recover his loot from a robbery (AD) **7.00** The Motorbike Show. Presenter Henry Cole rides a 1960s drag bike at North Weald airstrip **8.00** Cycling: Women's Tour of Britain Highlights Action from stage one of the race **9.00 FILM: RoboCop 3 (18, 1993)** Sci-fi thriller sequel starring Robert Burke and Nancy Allen (AD) **11.05** All Elite Wrestling: Collision. Hard-hitting, high-flying action **1.05am** Benidorm. Comedy series (AD) **2.00am-3.00** BattleBots

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.15** The Bill **8.10** Doctors **9.20** Classic Holby City **10.40** Casualty (AD) **11.40** The Bill **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Classic Neighbours **3.00** Whitstable Pearl (AD) **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Chelsea Detective. A former pop star is found dead just days before Christmas. (1/6) (AD) **9.00** The Chelsea Detective. Max and Layla investigate a string of potential suspects (2/6) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. A former Irish dissident sheds light on a woman's abduction in 1983 (8/10) (AD) **11.20** Luther (3/4) (AD) **12.40am** Lovejoy. Drama series **1.50** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.50** The Chelsea Detective (SL) **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm The Big Deal with Steph McGovern. Sourcing and selling artwork for luxury homes. 11.40 MOTD: Uefa Champions League 12.25am Have I Got News for You (r) 12.55am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland
11.25pm Scotcast. Discussion on news (r) 11.55 FILM: Monkey Man (2024) 1.55am-6.00 BBC News

STV
10.40pm Scotland Tonight11.05 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace — What Happened Next (r) 12.05am-3.00 Shop on TV 4.15am-5.30 Unwind with STV

UTV
11.15pm-11.40 Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes (r)

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland 7.30 Scotland's Home of the Year 2024 (r) 8.00 Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) 8.55 Beechgrove Repotted (r) 9.00 Island Crossings (r) 10.00 River City 10.30 Icons of Football (r) 11.00 Scotcast 11.30pm-12.00 The Trials That Shocked Scotland (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 11.00 Camau Bach 12.00 News 12.05pm Cartrefi Cymru (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Lowri Morgan: Her 333 (r) 1.30 Garddio a Mwy (r) 2.00 News 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News 3.05 Siwrna Scandi Chris (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr 5.00 Stwnsh 6.00 Dan Do (r) 6.30 Adeiladu'r Freuddwyd: Camp Out West (r) 7.00 Heno 7.30 News 8.00 Pobol y Cwm 8.25 Cartrefi Cymru (r) 8.55 News 9.00 Priodas Pum Mil (r) 10.00 Y Deis (r) 10.30-11.35pm Ty Ffit (r)

PBS America

8.00am World of Stonehenge **9.20** The Stuarts **10.35** Dad's Secret War: France 1944 **11.50** The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship **1.00pm** Weathered: Earth's Extremes **1.35** World of Stonehenge **2.40** The Stuarts **3.50** Dad's Secret War: France 1944 **5.00** The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship **6.15** World of Stonehenge **7.20** The Stuarts. How Scotland became part of Great Britain in 1707 **8.30** Dad's Secret War: France 1944 **9.40** The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship. How Franco managed to prevail after the end of the Second World War **10.55** The Stuarts. How Scotland became part of Great Britain in 1707 **12.00** Dad's Secret War: France 1944 **1.15am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes. Climate issues

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **12.35pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.30** Billions (r) (AD) **4.40** Django (r) (AD) **6.45** House of the Dragon. Daemon arrives at Harrenhal in order to raise an army for the Blacks (r) (AD) **8.00** House of the Dragon. Rhaenys tries to keep the peace on the Black Council as Cole mounts a campaign into the Crownlands (r) (AD) **9.00** Task. An FBI agent heads up a task force to tackle a string of drug-house robberies (1/7) (r) (AD) **10.15** Station Eleven. Kirsten confronts the source of her deepest trauma at her old home (7/10) (r) **11.15** Station Eleven (8/10) (r) **12.20am** House of the Dragon. Fantasy (r) (AD) **2.40** Billions (r) (AD) **4.35** Sort Of (r) (AD) **5.05am-6.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2010s (r) **7.00** Discovering: John Malkovich (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** Stax: Soulsville USA (r) (AD) **10.00** The Story of Late Night (r) **10.55** Celtics City (r) (AD) **12.00** Being Mary Tyler Moore (r) **2.20pm** I Am Luke Perry (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00** Discovering: John Malkovich (r) (AD) **6.00 FILM: The Loneliest Whale — The Search for 52 (PG, TVM, 2021)** **8.00** Black Widow. Investigating the crimes of fraudster, bigamist and murderer Dena Thompson (r) (AD) **9.00** Black Widow (r) (AD) **10.00** Black Widow (r) (AD) **11.00** Premier League 360 — Big Sam's Bolton (r) (AD) **1.00am** The Great Rhino Robbery (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: John Malkovich (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** The World at War. Documentary series **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** The Blue Planet. Marine predators and prey (AD) **8.00** Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime. The making of *Full Circle*, a journey around the Pacific Rim **9.00** Simon Reeve's South America. Simon travels from Chile's Atacama Desert to Tierra Del Fuego **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Poker Byron Jacobs

Fold

You sit down to play poker. You're a "serious" player – you want to have fun but mainly you want to win. You are in a low to mid-stakes game. What's the plan?

You could wait for strong hands then bet them hard. Not bad. Unfortunately, everybody else is doing that too. Furthermore, you may not be playing world beaters but if you play very few hands it will be obvious what you are up to. That is something you really don't want at the poker table.

Here is some advice. I've given this advice before but it bears repeating as it is crucial in low to mid-stakes play. Fold. Fold more than you currently do. Don't be tempted to continue just because a hand looks nice (most players are). By folding at the right moments you can save yourself heartache and, more importantly, avoid haemorrhaging chips. And best of all – hardly anyone else in the games will be doing this. This doesn't mean sitting around waiting for premium hands. It means folding when the action tells you that your previously promising hand is no longer good enough.

Folding isn't glamorous. It doesn't earn you respect. It won't give you a huge thrill. But it will save you money. Chips you avoid losing are worth just as much as chips you win. If you have sticky fingers and can't easily release hands, keep in mind the following heuristic. What is the strongest hand you beat? Is Villain likely to have it? If not, fold and move on. Some examples:

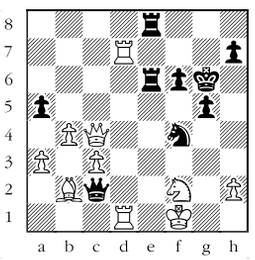
1) Preflop. You pick up a promising hand. There is a raise and someone else reraises. Fold almost everything. You can consider A-K or any pair 9-9 and higher (maybe 10-10 if the players are tight). Other than that, it's a closing down sale: everything must go. A-Q – not good enough (does Villain have A-J in their range? No); 8-8 – same issue: Villain never has 7-7. A pretty suited connector, say 5♣-4♣? Don't even think about it. Bin it.

2) On the flop. Preflop someone raised, there was a call, you called with K♥-Q♥ (this is fine) and the big blind called. The four of you see the flop of Q♠-9♠-8♦. Great! You have top pair with a strong kicker. The big blind unexpectedly leads out and the preflop raiser now raises. What do you do? Fold. Two players have shown strength in a multi-way pot. The flop is set up for straights and flushes. Your hand would be fine heads-up but with all this action you are probably crushed already.

3) You flop top pair, weak kicker. Villain bets the flop, turn and river, known as a *three-barrel*. The final board is K-9-3-7-8 and you have K-10. Your calls so far have been fine but in mid to low-stakes play you must fold the river. Players in these games "never" three-barrel bluff (they do at higher stakes). The strongest K-x you beat is K-6 and they never have that. Fold.

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki
go to page 10

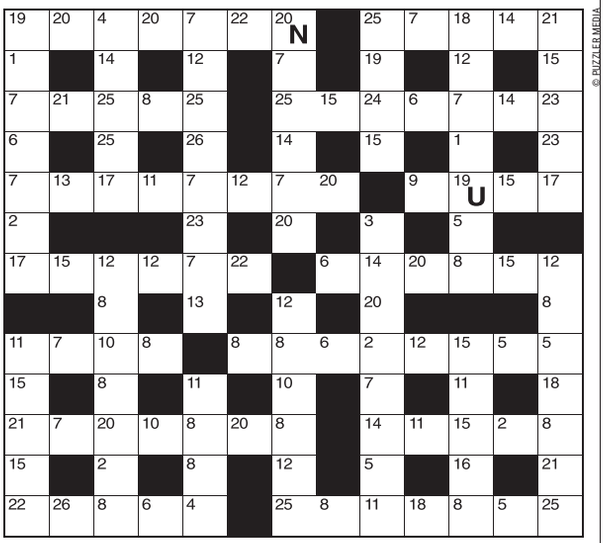
Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is from Goldin-Rachels, Saint Louis 2026.

Black has a very strong position and a simple continuation such as 1 ... Qxb2 should certainly be good enough to win. However, there's an ingenious combination that showcases beautifully the knight's unique ability to hop around the board. What is the key move that transforms the knight into the virtuoso of the piece?

Codeword No 5923



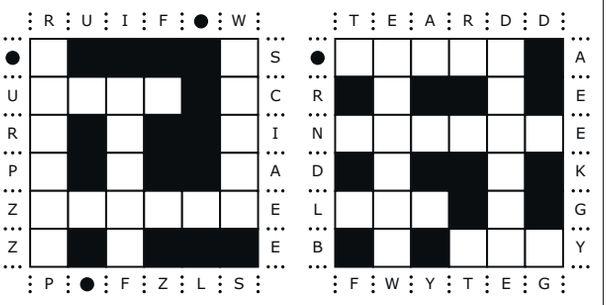
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
					U	N						

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

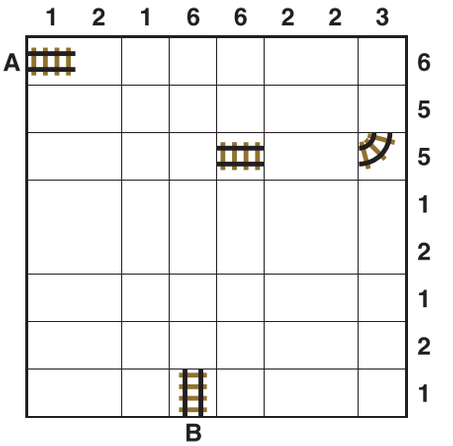
Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9063 Hard No 9064



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2948



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2650

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Beer grabbed by chap in tavern (4)

2 Tree in sand, reportedly (5)

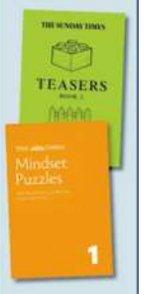
3 Cat perhaps sat beside vehicle's mat (6)

4 Comprehensive empty, exit cleared (7)

5 Struggling to speak, one gutted, I suspect (6-4)

A	A	B	B	C	C	D	E
E	E	E	E	E	G	H	I
I	K	L	N	N	N	O	P
P	R	T	T	T	T	T	U

Challenge your mind with these fiendish word and number puzzles



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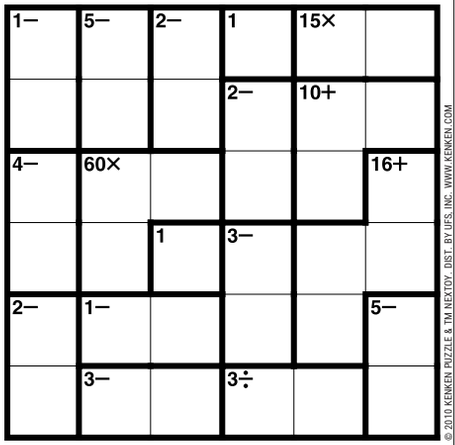
KenKen Medium No 6915



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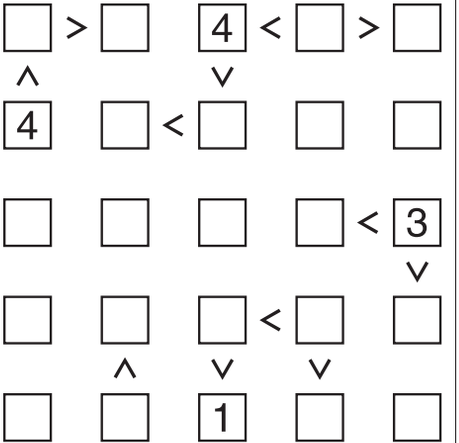
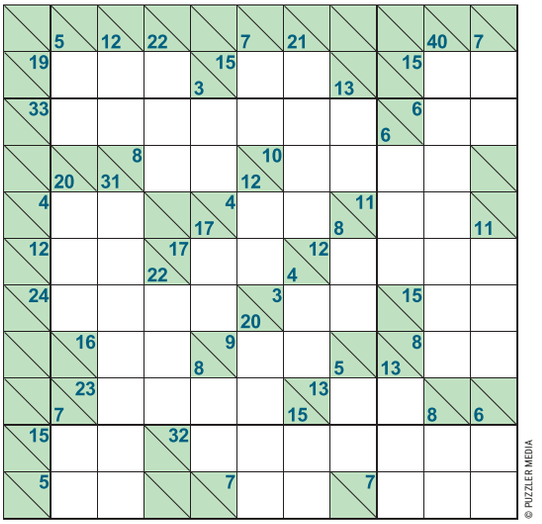
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5463



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4422



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,239

Across
1 Symbol (6)
5 Unduly lenient (4)
8 Categorise (4)
9 Fraudulent medicine (5,3)
10 Northwest English county (8)
11 Coastal transport hub (4)
12 Cause bodily harm to (6)
14 Edible flatfish (6)
16 Divide; acting role (4)
18 Meddled (with) (8)
20 Entranceway upright (8)
21 Red deer stag (4)
22 Demanding, tough (4)
23 Begrudge (6)

Down
2 Relative of the coot (7)
3 Sports car manufacturer; aquatic flower (5)
4 Act of guiding the wrong way (12)
5 Cleaning implement; football position (7)
6 Franciscan brother, eg (5)
7 Let the buyer beware! (6,6)
13 Said, articulated (7)
15 Seize with large numbers of troops (7)
17 Ancient Athenian marketplace (5)
19 Organisation's essential principles and culture (5)

Solution to Crossword 10,238

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Modern Bidding Developments
33. Opener supports then responder bids 2NT

Take an (uncontested) start to an auction such as 1♦-1♠-2♠. Here are three hands opener could hold for the raise to 2♠.

♠J643	♠J82	♠KJ2
♥K2	♥A732	♥K43
♦AK642	♦AQ632	♦A96432
♣53	♣2	♣6

The first is the classic minimum opener with 4♠-5♦. However, the fourth spade is far from nailed on.

You should also raise to 2♠ with the second (you'd do so even with hearts and clubs swapped); and also with the third (rebid 2♦, and you may play there on a 6-1 fit when you have a lovely making spade contract on a 5-3 fit).

So how should responder unpick the situation? The answer is that a 2NT bid now should be a one-round force. And, as such, it need not be balanced. It is a forcing, asking bid.

After 1♦-1♠-2♠-2NT, opener would now bid 3♠ with the first — minimum with a fourth spade. She'd bid 3♥ with the second, showing her precise 3♠4♥5♦1♣ shape. And she'd bid 3♦ with the third — 3♠-6♦.

You've lost very little playing 2NT as a one-round force. How often do you want to play in precisely 2NT after 1♦-1♠-2♠? Almost never, I'd say. Same applies to the 2NT bid after equivalent auctions such as 1♣-1♥-2♥ and 1♥-1♠-2♠.

Playing 2NT as a one-round force helps to clarify the meaning of other bids. After our initial 1♦-1♠-2♠ start, a move by responder of 3♣/♥ would be a natural/trial/help-suit bid, guaranteeing a fifth spade. A move of 3♠ would be invitational, again guaranteeing a fifth spade. The best meaning of 3♦, opener's suit, is non-forcing (constructive) with only four spades.

Dealer: South
Vul: Neither

North: ♠A953 ♥A93 ♦Q3 ♣KQ53
West: ♠KJ ♥KJ87 ♦9765 ♣J109
East: ♠Q1074 ♥Q10642 ♦108 ♣86
South: ♠862 ♥5 ♦AKJ42 ♣A742

S	W	N	E
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠ (1)	Pass	2NT(2)	Pass
3♣(3)	Pass	4♣(4)	Pass
4♦(5)	Pass	6♣(6)	End

(1) Better than 2♣ because she is not worth a third bid if partner makes a non-forcing rebid such as 2♦, 2NT or 3♣. Her three-card spade support would then get lost.
(2) One-round force.
(3) Showing her precise 3♠1♥5♦4♣ shape.
(4) Setting the trump suit, forcing.
(5) Control bid.
(6) That ♦Q is HUGE.

Declarer won West's ♣J lead with ♣A. She crossed to ♥A and ruffed ♥3. She returned to ♣K (both following — good) and ruffed ♥9. She now crossed to ♦Q, cashed ♣Q (drawing the last trump) and could lead ♦3 to ♦AKJ4. With a trump and ♠A in dummy still to come, that was all 13 tricks made!

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY 150	-25	x 2	-6	−1/4 OF IT	−1/3 OF IT	+6	÷8	HALVE IT	x 3	ANSWER
MEDIUM 136	-4	÷11	+3	SQUARE IT	x 4	+3/10 OF IT	DOUBLE IT	÷5	-67	ANSWER
HARDER 166	HALVE IT	-48	−3/5 OF IT	HALVE IT	CUBE IT	+25	x 3	+21	DOUBLE IT	ANSWER

Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 15 words, average; 20, good; 25, very good; 31, excellent

Yesterday's answers
ale, alee, **athlete**, eat, eel, elate, eta, eth, hale, hate, heal, heat, heel, late, lathe, latte, lea, leat, lee, leet, let, tael, tale, tea, teal, teat, tee, the, thee, theta

Cell Blocks No 5806

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Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4425

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Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Tricky No 10,884

Killer Deadly No 10,885

As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3383

Codeword 5922

Kakuro 4421

Train Tracks 2947

Sudoku 17,034

8	7	2	5	9	3	4	6	1
5	9	4	1	6	7	2	8	3
6	1	3	4	2	8	9	5	7
1	4	8	2	3	6	7	9	5
2	3	6	9	7	5	1	4	8
9	5	7	8	4	1	6	3	2
7	6	9	3	5	2	8	1	4
4	8	5	7	1	9	3	2	6
3	2	1	6	8	4	5	7	9

Tetonor 701

15	294	36	98
6 + 9	49 x 6	30 + 6	14 x 7
204	29	180	55
12 x 17	17 + 12	6 x 30	49 + 6
54	100	21	138
9 x 6	10 x 10	14 + 7	46 x 3
56	49	208	20
4 + 52	3 + 46	4 x 52	10 + 10

Sudoku 17,035

1	9	3	7	2	5	4	8	6
6	7	5	8	3	4	2	9	1
2	8	4	1	9	6	5	3	7
3	6	8	9	1	2	7	4	5
5	2	9	4	8	7	6	1	3
7	4	1	6	5	3	8	2	9
8	5	7	3	4	1	9	6	2
9	1	2	5	6	8	3	7	4
4	3	6	2	7	9	1	5	8

Cell Blocks 5805

Set Square 4424

Lexica 9061

Sudoku 17,036

6	5	8	4	3	1	2	7	9
7	2	3	9	8	6	1	5	4
1	9	4	2	7	5	3	6	8
4	6	2	8	5	9	7	1	3
3	8	9	6	1	7	4	2	5
5	7	1	3	2	4	9	8	6
8	4	5	1	9	2	6	3	7
9	1	7	5	6	3	8	4	2
2	3	6	7	4	8	5	9	1

Futoshiki 5462

KenKen 6914

Lexica 9062

Killer 10,882

5	1	8	4	2	7	9	3	6
3	9	2	6	1	5	4	8	7
6	7	4	8	3	9	5	1	2
2	3	7	5	8	4	6	9	1
9	4	1	7	6	2	8	5	3
8	5	6	1	9	3	7	2	4
7	2	3	9	5	6	1	4	8
4	8	9	2	7	1	3	6	5
1	6	5	3	4	8	2	7	9

Killer 10,883

1	3	2	8	6	4	5	7	9
7	9	4	5	2	1	3	6	8
8	6	5	9	7	3	4	2	1
4	7	1	3	8	9	2	5	6
3	5	6	7	1	2	9	8	4
9	2	8	4	5	6	1	3	7
2	4	9	6	3	7	8	1	5
6	8	3	1	9	5	7	4	2
5	1	7	2	4	8	6	9	3

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Least
2 Onside
3 Inward
4 Sluices
5 Nineties

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Pint
2 Beech
3 Carpet
4 Blanket
5 Tongue-tied

Sakuro 4824

Brain Trainer
Easy 24
Medium 401
Harder 2,250

Word watch

Escroc (a) A confidence trickster (*Collins*)
Somnial (b) Pertaining to dreams (*Chambers*)
Hustlements (a) Odds and ends (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 ... Re1+! is designed to bring the white king to an awkward square. After 2 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 3 Kxe1 the scene is set and the black knight shows off its skills: 3 ... Ng2+ 4 Kf1 Ne3+ 5 Kg1 Nxc4 with a decisive material advantage

Quiz

1 Jamie Oliver **2** Sputnik **3** Andy Burnham **4** Thames **5** *Venus de Milo* **6** Rome **7** Maxwell House **8** Chanel. It was designed by Matthieu Blazy **9** Henry V **10** *Punch and Judy* **11** Norfolk **12** Thomas Hardy **13** Curry Barker **14** Mayo **15** Richard Layard

THE TIMES

19.08.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles
See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Escroc
a A confidence trickster
b A system of goods exchange
c A giant bird of Arabian myth

Somnial
a Shadowy, poorly lit
b Pertaining to dreams
c The uncorking of a bottle

Hustlements
a Odds and ends
b Last-minute tasks
c The prongs of a portcullis

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Difficult No 17,037

6				9			
					5		
9	2	3					
		4		6	3		5
	3	9	4		1		2
				8			
2	8			3	6	7	
	7	6		2		1	
		1				6	8

Fiendish No 17,038

					7		
5		7	6				3
					3		2 4
6							9
9			5			6	
4							3
					4		8 2
1		6	2				4
					9		

Super fiendish No 17,039

4							
		8				3	7
2		7	3	1			9
6		1	8				
		6		9	1		
2		4	5				
7		9	1	6			5
		5				2	3
5							

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Which celebrity chef hosted the 2020-21 Channel 4 series *Jamie: Keep Cooking Family Favourites*?

2 The first synthetic cells to complete a full cell cycle, SpudCells are partly named after which Soviet satellite?

3 Bev Craig has been elected mayor of Greater Manchester, succeeding which Labour politician?

4 Rising in Bedfordshire, the Lea is a major tributary of which river?

5 What ancient Greek statue in the Louvre was called "Our Lady of Beauty" by Heinrich Heine?

GETTY IMAGES

6 Beneventum (275BC) was the final battle fought between Epirus and which ancient republic?

7 Which US coffee brand is known for the slogan: "Good to the last drop"?

8 Which French fashion house made the bridal gown Dua Lipa wore for her wedding ceremony in Sicily?

9 In a Shakespeare play, which king tells Fluellen that he is wearing a leek "for I am Welsh"?

10 In which Harrison Birtwistle opera does a murderous title character pursue his dream girl, Pretty Polly?

11 The oldest wildlife trust nature reserve in the UK, Cley Marshes is in which county?

12 Written between 1867 and 1868, *The Poor Man and the Lady* was which English writer's unpublished first novel?

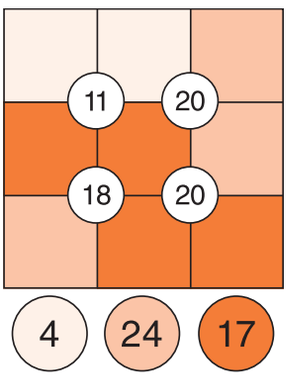
13 Which US filmmaker wrote and directed the 2026 horror movie *Obsession*?

14 Which county recently won its first All-Ireland Senior Football Championship since 1951?

15 Which labour economist, Labour peer and happiness expert is pictured?

Answers on page 15

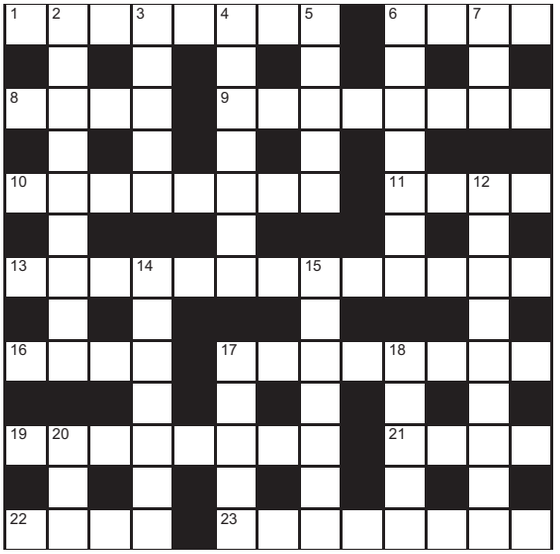
Sakuro
No 4824



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3384 by Izetti



Across

1 Business arrangement is sealed by Italian, someone unrealistic (8)
6 Quietly push baby's conveyance (4)
8 Name of woman in dungarees, messy (4)
9 Fatter doorkeeper, about 51 (8)
10 Put off job, one going after power (8)
11 Cover animal found by lake (4)
13 Break-up affected a man fretting about love (13)
16 Inventor entertained by Nobel laureate (4)
17 Things to eat a little piggy found in containers (8)
19 I spot men developing unfair recruitment process? (8)
21 Enthusiastic expression of grief (4)
22 Permit the old man to join ship (4)
23 Bit of money in bank a little while back (8)

Down

2 Verbal communication sure seems odd after musical party (9)
3 Spy, adult bloke (5)
4 Pray, learning to pursue devil (7)
5 Husband boarding plane perhaps — he and two others? (5)
6 Tale cop spun out — it may stink (7)
7 Get rid of a cross employee finally (3)
12 Bread, complete lunch in itself? (9)
14 Instrument of execution — girl's getting depressed inside (7)
15 Strange comet — it is treated as significant symbol (7)
17 Completely heartless partner seen outside port earlier (5)
18 Number protecting a king captured (5)
20 Greek character had turned up (3)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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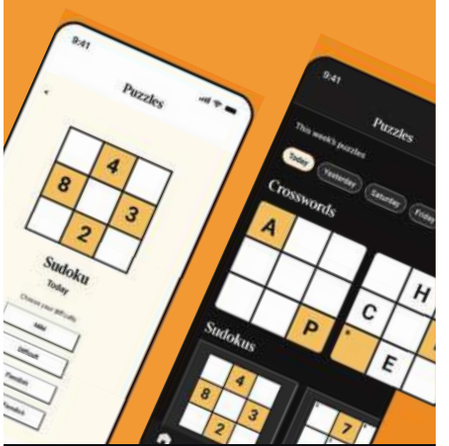

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